

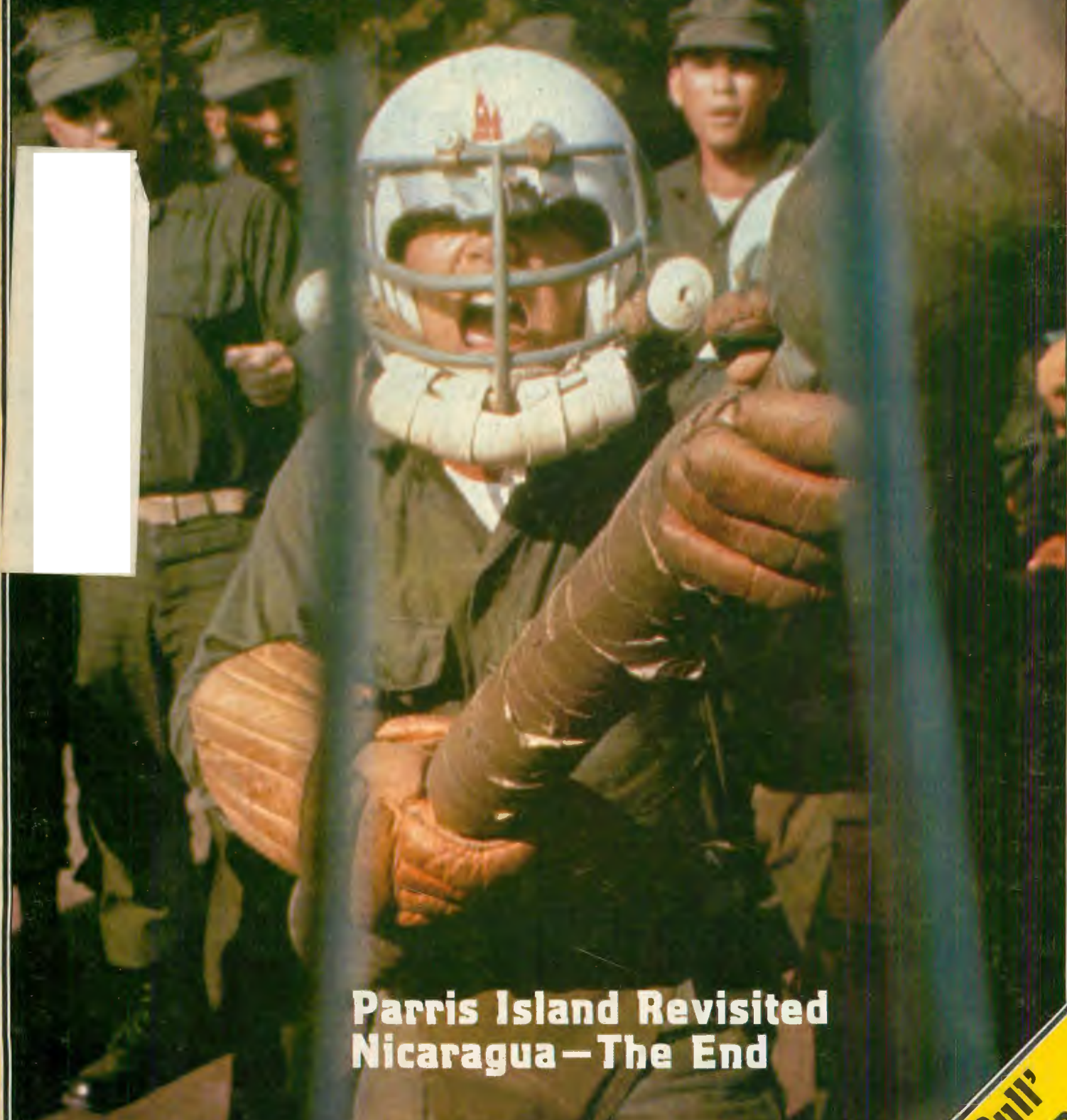


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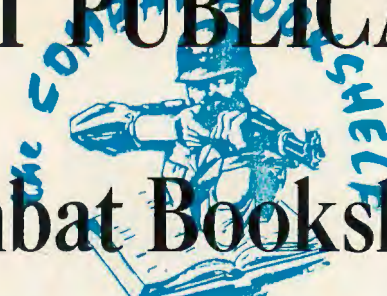
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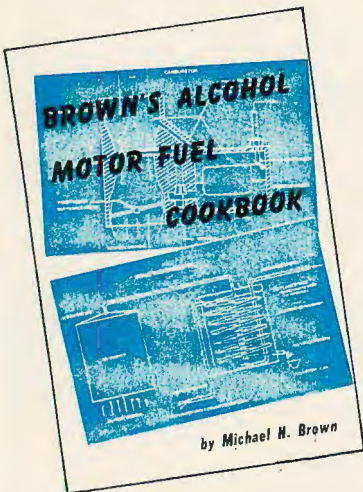
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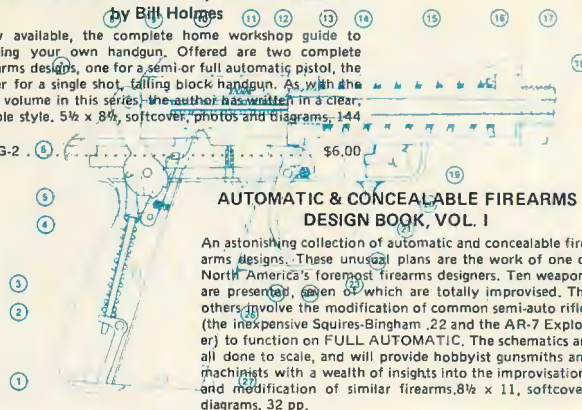
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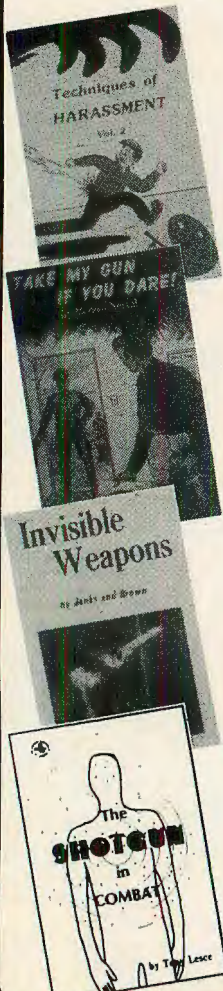
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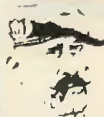


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# SOLDIER OF FORTUNE



THE COVER: "If you want to fight, join the Marines" is an old Marine Corps recruiting slogan. Here two recruits at Parris Island battle it out with pugil sticks. Two Marines? Yep. In this photo the reader is one of them, looking through his face mask at the assailant. (USMC PHOTO)

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# FLAK



## ONWARD, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS ...

Sirs:

Being a born-again believer in Jesus Christ, I would like to make a couple of comments, based on an ongoing study of Bible doctrine, which I believe would be of interest to you and to your readers.

1. War is not immoral but rather justified by God as a means for protecting a national entity wherein the people can exercise freedom.

2. Warfare in a country other than your own is justified when the enemy is a known or sworn enemy of your own country. In modern parlance, this means American fighting men are correct in beating the crap out of any group of communist forces any place in the world, and anyone in our government who ties the hands of our military, as they did in Vietnam, is guilty of treason.

3. The training of young men in the fine art of total destruction of the enemy is commanded by God in the Bible...

Should this letter hit print, I know that some of our so-called Christian leaders will scream with rage at my "heresy," but to them, and all who follow their thinking, I believe that three words should suffice: stupid, yellow cowards.

Sincerely,  
 Daniel L. Keel  
 Elmira, New York

## 60 MINUTES LETTER ...

Sirs:

Wanted to let you know that I scored a direct hit on the media with the attached letter. It was read by Dan Rather, April 29, on *60 Minutes*. Rather said he felt the letter was not very friendly. I had no idea he was so intelligent!

Sincerely,  
 Kenneth G. Paynter  
 Lubbock, Texas

Re: Rhodesia vs. black communists

Dear Mr. Rather:

I was very disappointed, when I first learned of the "unsuccessful" Rhodesian raid on the black communist guerrilla stronghold. Now, I learn from you, on *60 Minutes*, that the Rhodesians just missed getting you also. Will my disappointment never end!

## FIGHTING FOR KEEPS ...

Sirs:

Please give more coverage to Rafael Lima, your new martial arts editor. "Fighting for Keeps" is a good headline to introduce all his work. I have many books on self-defense but he comes right to the point and the pictures are excellent. I would like to see three to four pages devoted to "self-defense" in each issue.

Thank you,  
 Norman Wilensik  
 Forest Hills, New York

## HORSE SOLDIERS ...

Sirs:

I enjoyed Major Mike Williams' articles about his experience with horse-mounted troops in Rhodesia. I am also pleased that in your May '79 issue (FLAK, p.6), S.T.T. Rouillier agreed with my "Horsepower for Vietnam" article published in *Military Review*, May 1969, in which I suggested there might be a place for the horse for anti-guerrilla patrolling.

From the vantage point of 10 years' hindsight and such experiences as Maj. Williams', I still believe the idea to be a worthy one.

Lt. Col. James L. McCoskey  
 Scottsburg, Indiana

## BELT BUCKLE QUESTION ...

Sirs:

While reading the article, "Secrets of Modern Battle-Axe Fighting," by Jeff Cooper (SOF, Apr. '79), I noticed the U.S. Secret Service buckle that Cooper is wearing; I was wondering if a copy of that buckle can be obtained. If so, where and how much.

Yours truly,  
 Keith M. Randel  
 Downey, California

*Jeff Cooper replies: I got mine from a fairly senior Secret Service man in Washington. I do not believe they are for sale.*

Continued on page 82



# FULL AUTO

USUALLY, I frown on indulging in “product recommendations,” the “hyping” of various items for sale to the buying public. But, on the other hand, over a period of time, I have come across a few really worthwhile items I think are worth their price because they accomplish what they are intended to do. For this reason, they are valid, useful items to anyone who has need of them.

The first of these is a chemical cleaner/lubricant known as “Break Free.” Break Free is manufactured by the San-Bar Corp., Chemicals Division, Dept. SOF, 17422 Pullman St., Santa Ana, CA 92711, and is claimed by actual government testing — to remove 98 percent of all firing residue (carbon, primer salts, lead, etc.), has a neutral pH formula (neither acid nor base) that will not harm anything, is a super-super lubricant, and, after more than 100 hours in a salt-spray solution, test items showed no evidence of rust or corrosion.

That’s a big claim, but the U.S. Army is testing Break Free for possible adoption. I have been testing Break Free for the last three months, using a S&W M76 9mm SMG, an Ingram M10, .45 ACP SMG, an M1918A1 cal. .30 BAR, an M-1 cal. .30 Garand, an M1928 Thompson, and a Heckler & Koch HK-91 cal. .308 rifle as test vehicles.

My findings show the stuff is a good lubricant, a superior cleaning agent, and smells a bunch better than my previous favorite for the purpose, Tri-Flon. Guns treated with Break Free have shown no sign of deterioration even though a number of them have been used extensively with ammunition that possesses corrosive priming. Actions that are silky smooth, trigger pulls that are improved, wear that’s notably less, and cleaning that is easier are what counts to me, and these things are exactly what the product accomplishes. When you need it, pick some up. I don’t think you’ll be sorry.

THE second item is a pair of 8x30, rubber-armored binoculars by Tasco. Everyone needs a decent pair of “binos” and I — no exception — find myself torn between choosing those of either decent performance or durable construction. Let’s face it: binoculars just plain get beaten up in the field. Well, these seem to be handling the abuse just fine, thank you (at least I haven’t been able to bust them up yet).

The optics are quite acceptable, the price is under \$100, and they come with an OD rubber finish that is tactically sound as well as protective of the instrument. With this, you get a couple of straps to hang it on and a hard, green carrying case to boot. I like these binos, and although I wish they were in 7x35 or 7x50, I can get along with them in 8x30 just fine. I find them a useful addition to my field gear



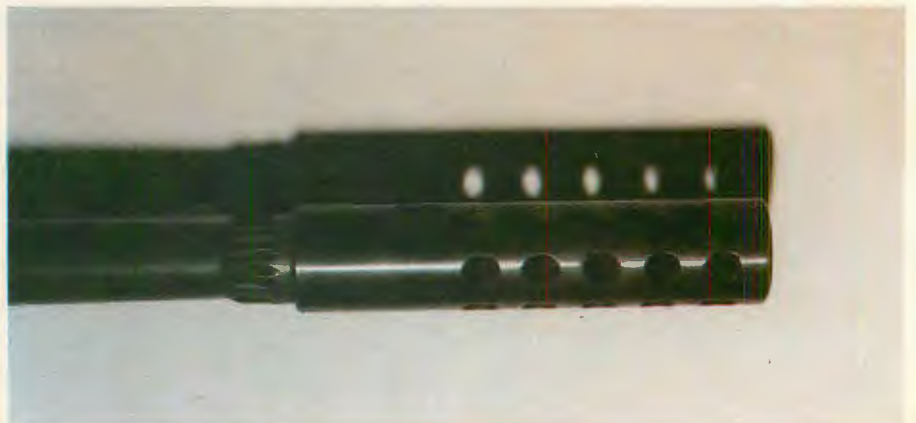
by Chuck Taylor

and recommend them highly. They are, of course, optically adjustable in the usual fashion.

THE third item is made and marketed by my old friends, Tom and Denny Reese of Springfield Armory, Geneseo, IL, and is the answer to the prayer of the guy who can’t afford or find an original M14E2 bipod.



ABOVE: TASCOS 8x30 rubber armored binoculars with OD finish. LEFT: New Springfield Armory bipod for M1A, mounted on Taylor’s M14. BELOW: Choate Machine works flash suppressor for H&K G3/HK91 rifle.





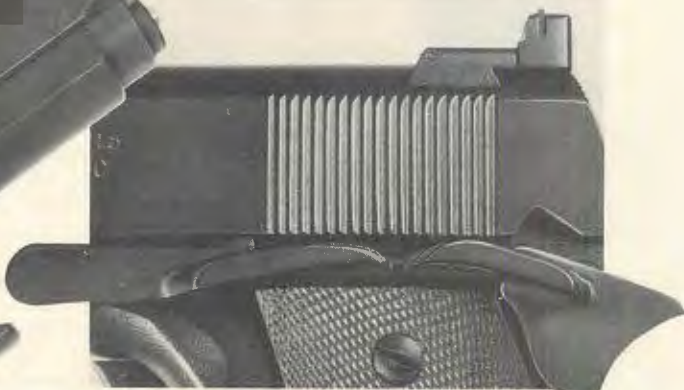
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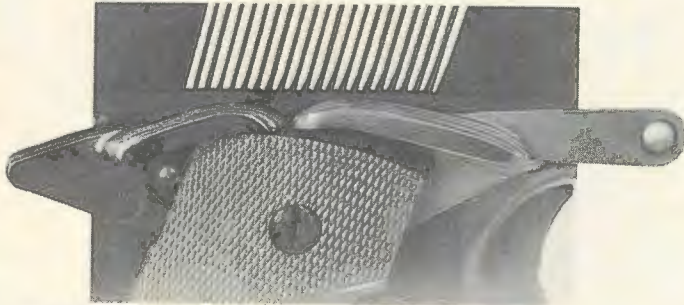
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In actuality, the M14E2 bipod was intended for the automatic rifle of the same designation, and the addition of that bipod to a guy's M1A accomplishes little or nothing except to add to the weight of the gun. The new unit from Springfield is lighter, simpler, and cheaper (about \$40) than the standard, now rare M14E2 unit, and fulfills the purpose just as well.

Installation consists merely of clamping it onto the bayonet lug assembly of your M1A and sighting the weapon in to be used with the bipod. Accuracy didn't seem to be affected adversely on my M1A, but the point of impact, as with any bipod mounted to the barrel or gas system of a weapon, was higher than it is when the weapon is used without a bipod.

The construction of the unit appears to be sound and simple and I think the guy who wants to set up his M1A for sniping or for work where the weapon will be used from the bipod can use this item.

**T**HE last item is a flash suppressor assembly for the M16/AR15, H&K rifles, and Mini-14s made by Garth Choate, Choate Machine Works, Dept. SOF, Bald Knob, Arkansas. Unit quality is excellent

and actually improves flash reduction performance, particularly with H&K guns. So, if you need better performance in this area or just want a new flash suppressor for your pet piece, drop Garth Choate a note.

**T**HE people at Heckler & Koch have advised me they are dropping the 40-round magazine for the .223 (5.56mm) HK33, HK53, and HK93 rifles from the H&K line. Their reason was that the mag, although reliable, had proven to be too long and was, as a result, too cumbersome, etc. Personally, I liked the magazine and found it to be of excellent quality, as with all H&K products. Many of you with HK93s will want to grab all of these mags you can before they are "out of print"—I have!



**ROBERT POOS**, Managing Editor of Soldier of Fortune Magazine wishes to contact Robin Mannock, former AP Correspondent in Vietnam and former News-week writer in New York.



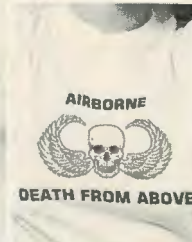
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**B**



## LONG BOW IN WORLD WAR II

**T**HE Apennines, Italy, 1945 — The 10th Mountain Division squad climbed cautiously toward the ruined building looming on a barren hilltop. Their objective: to take out a German machine-gun nest.

Suddenly, scouts brought back word of a listening post hidden below the summit and Sgt. Ralph Hulbert, squad archer, was brought up to eliminate it. He bent his bow and an arrow sang through the night into the head of the unsuspecting sentry, followed by the rattle of gunfire and the explosion of hand grenades as his squad rushed the German position.

Although this episode, a training exercise held to the rear of the front line in which the sentry was a dummy, is the only one of which Hulbert will speak, other 10th Mt. vets indicate he did indeed use his skill as an archer to down sentries silently, enabling the division to surprise German strongholds, and Hulbert recalls a general, who witnessed the 86th Mountain Infantry regiment exercise, declaring, "Well, we need an archer on every night patrol."

Hulbert, 59, to whom archery has been a lifelong avocation, is a retired school teacher living in Denver, Colo. He carried his long bow throughout the 10th Mountain's part of the Allied campaign in Italy, helping his regiment break the German defense line across the Apennines.

When asked if archery is still useful in modern warfare, he said, "Only to the extent that infantry is still part of modern warfare. If infantry does not have a place in modern warfare, then of course the bow and arrow or other primitive instruments — the boomerang, for instance — would be of no value. You've got to be at a point where you can be close enough to use a knife."

He also declared that the bow's main advantages were its silence and its psychological impact: "If you go out in the morning and find one of your sentinels killed with an arrow, this is tremendously detrimental to morale."

—M.L. Jones

(See feature article, "Whispering Killer," on page 62.)



## NORTH AMERICAN FALs NATO's Search for a Standard Rifle by R. Blake Stevens.

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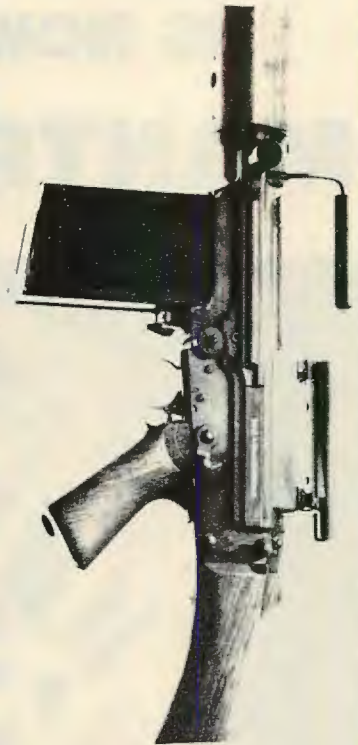
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### RHODESIA RECEIVES AIRCRAFT ...

Despite UN sanctions, the Rhodesian air force continues to receive new military aircraft. Among the latest recruits are several Siai Marchetti SF-260W Warrior light strike aircraft.

In 1977 Aviation Spare Parts Europe delivered 22 Warriors, ostensibly to the Comores Republic in the Indian Ocean (population 250,000). Most if not all of them have now ended up in Rhodesia.

The Rhodesian air force has also received four Rockwell OV-10F Bronco counter-insurgency aircraft, according to reliable sources, part of 16 supplied to Indonesia in 1976 and 1977.

It also seems likely that 13 Bell 205 helicopters, now in Rhodesia, came through similar indirect routes. The choppers were ordered from Agusta (Italy) for a customer in Kuwait. Arriving in Beirut via ship, they were unloaded and moved to a Christian suburb. Reports suggest they later passed to Israel in exchange for small arms and ammunition.

The Israeli government may have passed the aircraft directly to Rhodesia or used them to replace older models in its own armed forces, releasing used vehicles for unofficial export.

### NEW MARINE COMMANDANT ...

One famous Marine Corps combat hero has handed over to another the post of Commandant of the Corps.

On June 29, Gen. Louis H. Wilson, a Medal of Honor winner, stepped down as 26th Commandant, and Gen. Robert Barrow, holder of the Navy Cross and Army Distinguished Service Cross, became the 27th.

For Wilson, whose craggy face somewhat resembles the famous Marine Corps bulldog tattoo, it ended a 38-year career as a Marine, during which he won the nation's highest decoration for heroism while leading an infantry company during the invasion of Guam in World War II.

Gen. Barrow, 57, and a 37-year Marine, won his Navy Cross while commanding an infantry company of the First Marine Regiment during the Marines' epic battle from Korea's Chosin Reservoir to the sea. The regiment itself was commanded at that time by the Marines' legendary Lewis B. (Chesty) Puller, winner of more decorations for heroism than any other Marine in the Corps' history.

Barrow won the Army's Distinguished Service Cross while commanding the Ninth Marine Regiment in Vietnam during Operation Dewey Canyon in 1969.

## 7TH SF GROUP STILL THERE ...

Final word on the possible demise of the 7th Special Forces Group has yet to be uttered, informed sources reported to SOF.

The "red flash" 7th — one of three Green Beret units left in the active Army — has been targeted for elimination some time in fiscal year 1980, which begins October 1. The group has three battalions — two at Fort Bragg, N.C., and one in the Panama Canal Zone.

The Army reportedly has been considering eliminating two of the battalions and using those manpower spaces to help activate new conventional units. The plan also envisions using the remaining 450 or so spaces from the Group's 1,100-man strength authorization to form a Special Forces Battalion Task Force.

The final decision on whether to deactivate the 7th will be made by the Army's Chief of Staff. The basis for that decision will be contained in a so-called "decision memorandum" for the Chief and informed sources said the document hasn't been written yet. When the document paving the way for a final life-or-death decision will surface is uncertain.

## GREY BERETS ANTI-TERRORIST UNIT ...

Carl E. Buck (P.O. Box 79, Hallstead, PA 18822) reports positive response to his formation of two groups of "Grey Berets" (see FLAK, June '78), anti-terrorist units to be located in strategic U.S. areas.

In mid-September he held an organizational camp at Oneonta, N.Y. He is currently seeking legal aid at local, state and federal levels, as well as information concerning possible target zones or hot spots.

Unit No. 1 of the Grey Berets is now being organized in Binghamton, N.Y., to cover a 180-mile radius. Buck hopes to form other units of professional soldiers and trained citizens throughout the rest of the country.

## MERCENARY LEFT TO ROT ...

Parents of a British mercenary have accused the British government of letting him rot in a foreign jail. The mercenary, former British army paratrooper Carl Fortuin, says he has had no official visits from a British government official this year.

Fortuin, 35, is one of seven British mercenaries jailed in 1976 for fighting in the Angolan civil war. He was given a 24-year sentence.

In his first letter home in seven months, he says he is being looked after reasonably well at the prison in the country's capital, Luanda.

A Foreign Office spokesman said the contents of the letter would be passed on to the "appropriate department."

Continued on page 89

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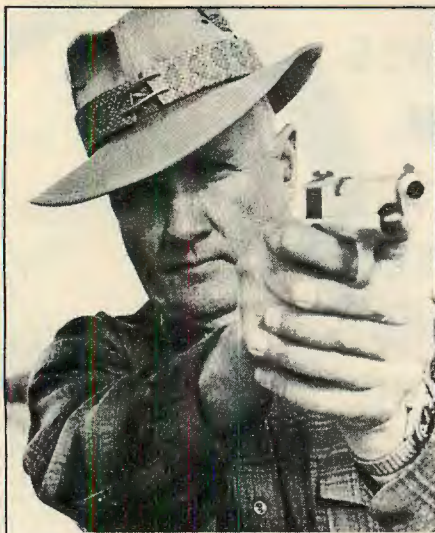
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Mr. Schneider is also the author of another unusual book, **MASTERS OF LEGALIZED CONFUSION AND THEIR PUPPETS** (65,000 copies in print!), an undisputed eye-opener written without compromise. Now **BOTH** books can be obtained for only **\$9.90 POST-PAID.** And for each additional set ordered, you pay just **\$7.90 extra—\$2 OFF** (a 20% saving)! Books can also be sent direct to your friends at no additional cost with your compliments! Prompt shipment guaranteed.

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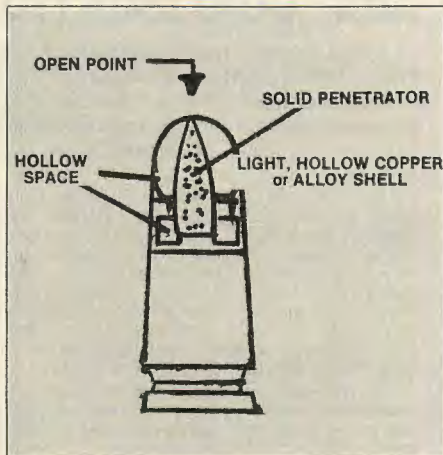


Figure 1

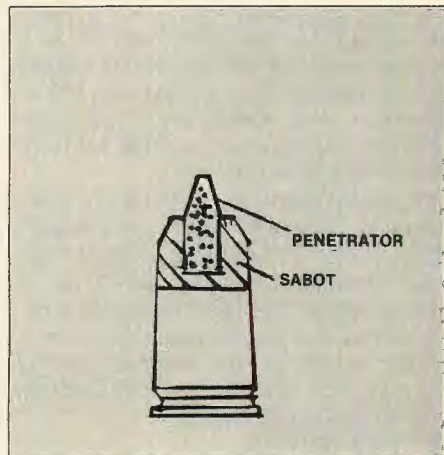


Figure 2

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*SOF's Combat Pistolcraft column welcomes letters from our readers. If you have a good question or contribution, send it to Jeff Cooper, care of SOF, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306. For a quick, personal reply, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.*

**Q.** Question 1: Installation of a lanyard ring on auto pistols (.45 Colt specifically). It occurs to me that when sleeping out in insecure areas (I'm thinking more of the bush, not the city), it might be nice to have the pistol attached to the wrist with cord. It won't end up in the bottom of the sleeping bag when one's rudely awakened by gunfire. It will always be there.

On the other hand, having it almost literally in hand during sleep might prove hazardous. It sounds dumb, but it's not inconceivable that a tense, restless dream might cause a slipping off of the safety and pulling the trigger. Result: bullet through leg — bad news. On the other hand, it would be nice to have the pistol right there when the lead flies.

Question 2: Night-sights. As most pistol activities seem to take place at night, wouldn't such sights be worthwhile? In SOF, May '79 ("Nite Site®," p. 36), there's an article on such equipment. Do you feel a need for glowing sights, and if so, what system do you find most suitable? Such systems might weaken the day sight-picture but, if it's true most actions

occur in the dark, wouldn't it be wise to play the odds? Is a compromised day-sight preferable to no night-sight at all?

Question 3: The .40 caliber auto round. Over the years, I've read many references to these. Is the .40 G&A in *Guns & Ammo*, Feb. '77, referred to? If not, what is in the works? Has this concept been abandoned? This idea would seem to offer something for small women and inexperienced folk who are intimidated by the .45 ACP but don't mind the 9mm. Or does it?

Question 4: Armor-piercing .45 ACP round. In SOF, Feb. '79, you mentioned interest in such to penetrate body armor worn by undesirables. Although I'm but a pup (24 years old), I've fired a wide variety of rifle and pistol ammo at an equally wide variety of objects. Based on this limited experience and the huge quantities of literature I've read concerning firearms, it seems that the one factor needed to penetrate barriers is velocity. Witness the results obtained with .223, .357 mag and 9mm when a light slug is shot fast. They usually penetrate metal plate and such when the big bores won't, even though they're not as lethal on unprotected humanoids. My experience has borne this out. A .17 Rem will often punch through material a large, slow slug won't. Not always but sometimes.

It would seem impossible to propel a normal-caliber, normal-weight bullet from the .45 ACP at the necessary speed.

Why not a subcaliber projectile at higher speed? (See Figure 1.) The idea in this figure is borrowed directly from the 30mm AP rounds for the GAU-8 Gatling gun used in the Fairchild A-10 attack aircraft. These rounds are intended to penetrate the hardest Soviet tanks, and tests have shown them extremely effective. The projectile looks like an ordinary, solid piece but is in fact "hollow" and contains a dense, hard, solid "penetrator" which actually does the work. For the 30mm round the penetrator is of depleted uranium but something less exotic should suffice for our purposes. The entire projectile goes to the target, but when impact occurs the outer casing disintegrates or "peels back" and the penetrator continues forward, having a hardness and sectional density many, many times that of the weak casing.

I've performed tests of this principle, using blowguns and airguns, and the "penetrator" always zips through the target leaving the dart base or whatever behind. Can see no reason why it wouldn't work in handguns, provided proper material and construction were used. Extensive testing would be required — expensive — but I'm positive it would work. Note the normal rounded shape for easy feeding in pistols and SMGs. The tip should be open so the penetrator can pass through easily. Incidentally, the 30mm round's tip is solid, but at a muzzle velocity of 3500 fps + it doesn't matter. It would take an expert to determine penetrator size and weight, but it seems it could be anywhere from .22 to .30 caliber. Now the rub — the advantage of heavy bullet and weight have been lost.

Whether it's better to penetrate with a small slug or knock over with a big non-penetrating slug is subject to debate. The small one may kill instantly or cause a victim to go into shock, but would probably not knock over. The big ones will flatten (temporarily) but leave the victim "intact" and probably shooting back when he recovers — seconds? Subsequent non-penetrating rounds may not be much help. On the other hand, the small slug may not do anything in time.

An alternative design is shown in Figure 2, based on the separating sabot principle. Although less desirable for feeding reasons, velocity of penetrator would probably be higher due to lighter weight of sabot as compared to "hollow" shell. Velocities of penetrators from .45 ACP rounds should be in the 1200-1300 fps range. Not much, but should have a much better chance of penetrating body armor than standard .45 ACP round.

Question 5: The Evil Day. The possibility of a total handgun ban is real. Question: What to do when the Evil Day occurs? This law would obviously be wrong, oppressive, totalitarian, of questionable motive, and quite unconstitutional. What is one supposed to do when the enforcers

of Big Brother's wisdom knock on the door? Run or fight? Running might well be construed as being cowardly in the face of the enemy, and could leave a bad taste in one's mouth.

On the other hand, how many people could pull the trigger on an official of law enforcement sporting blue uniform and badge? I don't think I could. Surrender means your guns lost forever — I've never heard of a gun law being repealed — and a feeling of having failed yourself and your country. Fighting means being branded a murderer and pursued as such.

You're probably saying, "See that it never happens by keeping such people out of office with the vote." Sounds reasonable but it may not be enough. We've seen that majority public opinion doesn't necessarily carry weight in Washington. Ludicrous laws are passed every year — over 20,000 gun laws on the books to date. The Evil Day could still happen, regardless of votes.

Might it not be in our — concerned gun owners' — best interest to formulate contingency plans to thwart the enforcers' efforts and render the law unenforceable? I'm not talking about massive, armed rebellion but massive disruption and harassment of the systems and agencies involved. Refusal of gun owners to pay income tax, for example, might have a sobering effect on the king. Big Brother needs Big Bucks to operate. Although one might risk going to jail, if the situation were resolved later, he would not have a law enforcement official's death on his conscience. I've dealt with this subject many times, trying to envision all possible scenarios, but I've yet to reach solid conclusions.

R.A.B., Middletown, Ohio

**A.** *The way to install a lanyard ring on a .45 auto is the way the government did in the first place. Most of mine have the original GI attachment installed now.*

*We find here at the school that, in any situation in which there is enough light to identify your enemy, your basic stance will suffice very well. This never ceases to surprise the students, and to tell the truth, it sometimes surprises me.*

*The 10mm pistol round remains to be developed. The Europeans tell me that they will build pistols for it as soon as we in America develop the cartridge. I tell them that we already have a cartridge and what they need is to develop one themselves. There the matter rests for the moment.*

*Your ideas for AP ammunition for the .45 pistol are very interesting and I imagine that someone will work them out sometime. Right now their principle drawback seems to be expense.*

*I cannot advise you as to the proper behavior when the Evil Day, God forbid, arrives. I am neither your father nor your pastor, and I certainly do not wish to ap-*

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pear in print as any sort of revolutionary. Your conscience is obviously a very personal thing. Literally millions of us in the 20th century have killed men against whom we have had no particular personal grudge. The degree to which that troubles us varies.

When faced with intolerable oppression some men will act in a way which definitely imperils the "civil rights" of their oppressor. Others will not. If we may take scripture as a guide, when the Evil Day finally came to Samson he tore down the entire temple on the heads of guilty and innocent alike. Whether that was a moral act or not is something that Samson took up in due course with his God.



ABOVE: Armand Swenson full-house combat-modified P-35 Browning Hi-Power 9mm pistol. Note hole in rear of trigger where retaining pin has been removed, making trigger action more reliable. BELOW: Custom Model 29 .44 magnum revolver. Hackathorn found weapon handled well and was easy to control, compared to his own stock four-inch M-29.



**A**N interesting trend is developing within IPSC ranks. As the designers of national and world title championships come up with more and more exotic courses of fire, competitors are looking to different gadgets to remain more competitive. A case in point is the up-and-coming rush to have custom P-35 Browning pistols built for use in these foot race type of assault courses. The problem, as usual, is with those who design the course. Many times they fail to consider the primary role of the handgun as a sidearm. It is strictly a *defensive* tool. To come up with a course of fire that requires more ammunition than a man normally carries

on his person is losing sight of the pistol's defensive role. In fact the limit should be 18 rounds of ammo, the basic load a revolver shooter will carry.

If additional stages are added, then repeated long-shot strings can be considered, but only with a limit of 18 shots. This may sound odd to the proponents of large capacity auto pistols, but we have allowed ourselves to nearly put the revolver out of the picture when it comes to being competitive in matches. Our aim is to teach people how to use their sidearms safely and efficiently. The fact is that a vast number of people in this world use and carry revolvers for self-defense. We should not exclude them from being part of our activity.

So, when one enters a contest that requires 36 rounds to a stage or assault course, the concept of a defensive encounter has been compromised. Defensive shooting situations take place at close range and are usually over in a few seconds. If your club or practical shooting league is determined to run action type courses, make sure that realism and practical defensive doctrine are followed. Since the Rhodesians hosted the 1977 World Championships, other organizations have decided the way to get ahead is to outdo their example with yet more running assault type matches that could be better solved with a sub-machine gun or assault carbine.

The dominant pistol for these long-winded shooting matches has become the P-35 9mm parabellum. It is the natural choice in those countries where the supply system is geared to NATO. However, in the U.S. many top competitors are also having custom pistolsmiths turn out specialized P-35 autos.

While the idea may not seem too bad to some, the P-35 of the future has taken on the look of the gadget gun. Not only are these pistols accuracy tuned, they sport Bar-Sto barrels, ambidextrous safeties, and long ported barrels. The final touch is to put a Bomar rib on the gun to reduce recoil and give the pistol a super-fine three-pound trigger pull.

A practical pistol is one suitable for daily wear as a self-defense sidearm. If we use weapons for matches only and others for daily carry, then we should refrain from giving the Police PPC crowd so much hell.

Shooters like Dave Westerhout of Rhodesia are forced to use the P-35 because of the available supply of 9mmP. His pistol is basically stock with the Bomar combat rib so well liked by the Rhodesians. He carries it as well as competes with it. He is very good with the P-35 Browning. His gear is thus practical. But when we see American shooters gearing up for the hot-rod P-35, then I sense that problems lie ahead for the practical shooting concept. Diversity in courses and in common-sense match layout is the only way that IPSC ideals can remain realistic.

**G**RANT Stapleton, owner of Sentinel Arms Co., Dept. SOF, 17 Olmstead Plaza, Middletown, PA 17057, recently showed me one of his new custom Model 29 .44 magnum revolvers. For years many of us have wondered what a snub-nose .44 mag would be like to shoot. Stapleton solved that inquiry when he brought out this new, highly customized S&W M-29. The barrel has been cut to 2¾ inches, the front sight relocated, the frame reshaped to allow the use of a pair of Pachmayr grips that would normally be used on a round-butt M-19 combat mag. This change in grip design alone does more to make the gun more comfortable and controllable when firing .44 mag. ammo. The barrel is Magnaported. As part of the barrel shortening operation, a crane lock has been installed instead of the center pin lock standard on S&W revolvers.

The action has been given Austin Behlert's "Micro Finish" and is beautiful. The final touch is a Metalife SS finish, a chrome industrial plating buffed to look like stainless steel. I fired the test gun about 25 times. I quit at that point because my nervous system got the shakes. Nonetheless, I was surprised at how well the Sentinel Arms Custom M-29 handled. It was easy to control, compared to my stock four-inch M-29. The improved grip design and super smooth action work seem to contribute more than anything else. For anyone wanting a fine belly gun, Sentinel Arms should be contacted for details.

One question keeps coming to mind. "What in the hell is it good for?" Aside from impressing your friends, I can imagine that it should be ideal for repelling boarders if members of the opposition are fond of jerking open your car door at intersections and attempting to rob you.

—Ken Hackathorn





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## NO MORE CONCAVE CURVES AN ALTERNATIVE TO SALT II AMENDMENTS

**T**HE M-X Missile System was to have become operational in Fiscal Year 1982, but because of administration vacillation, now cannot be ready until Fiscal Year 1986. But that initial operation capability means that only one M-X squadron would be ready to fire; it will be 1988 — three years after the SALT II treaty expires — before half of the M-X silos will be deployed, enough to provide any real payoff in the number of land-based U.S. warheads likely to survive a Soviet pre-emptive strategic attack. It will be 1990 before all 200 M-X missiles are ready to be shifted at random among their 4,500 or so holes, or by train in the alternate trench system.

As Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Dr. William Perry noted last March before the Senate Armed Services Committee:

"The effect of M-X survivability is relatively slight as the first few hundred or so shelters get deployed, but builds up very sharply after half of them are deployed." As Perry explained, a time-phased comparison of "the surviving U.S. ICBM re-entry vehicles versus the Soviet ICBM re-entry vehicles remaining after the United States rides out a Soviet pre-emptive ICBM [intercontinental ballistic missile] attack:

"You begin to get the major value of a MPS [Multiple Protective Structure] system when you reach the halfway point in the deployment. . . . It is a concave curve."

In that context, the SALT II treaty presents two major risks for U.S. security. The lesser of these risks is that SALT II will be passed without an *a priori* commitment to improve U.S. strategic forces enough to ensure a stable strategic balance. The greater of these risks is that SALT II will be defeated or delayed without such a commitment. Both outcomes are unacceptable.

As Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA) has wisely pointed out, the key issue now facing the Senate is not SALT II, but the future strategic vulnerability of the United States. What must be resolved is not the theoretical merits of the treaty, but whether the U.S. will undertake the force modernization programs needed to ensure the treaty has merit.

The *Armed Forces Journal's* June analysis of the SALT II treaty described in detail how the present treaty could reduce the risks of strategic competition with the USSR — if the U.S. chooses to compete. Unfortunately, however, the White House now inspires little confidence that it will take advantage of the security a SALT II agreement could offer. It is becoming more and more apparent that President Carter has not come to grips with the need to implement sound M-X, Trident II, or cruise missile programs, or the command and control improvements needed to make them work.

Late in May, the vacillation became so ludicrous that on the same day the president gave a speech claiming SALT II would assure U.S. security, a senior White House staff member indicated the U.S. might abandon a secure ICBM force for an "augmented dyad," and the Secretary of the Navy indicated that the Trident was escalating in cost to the point where it might have to be replaced by a cheaper SSBN (ballistic missile submarine) that had not even reached the drawing board.

Accordingly, we suggest that the time has come for both conservatives and moderates in the Senate to re-think their approach to SALT II. There is nothing to be gained in defeating or amending the treaty — unless the U.S. successfully implements the force improvements necessary to compete with the USSR. There is a vast amount to be gained in making such improvements a firm *quid pro quo* for Senate ratification of the treaty.

**T**HE Senate is *not* the body to negotiate treaties with the Soviet Union; but it *is* the body to negotiate force improvements with an indecisive and uncertain president. And the Senate has two very powerful tools it can use:

The first is the Budget and Impoundment Act of 1974. Under its provisions, the president must spend the amount of money the Congress appropriates and authorizes on the specific programs, and cannot spend funds on other designated expenditures unless they meet conditions the Congress sets. The Congress may never force the USSR to accept some of its proposed SALT II treaty amendments, but it *can* force the president to:

- Fund specific M-X, Trident II, air-launched cruise missile, and related strategic force improvements.
- Make such force improvements a clear pre-condition for any expenditures to study or negotiate SALT III, or to review and grant export licenses and negotiate future grain sales to the USSR;
- Make such programs a pre-condition for official travel to the USSR; and,
- Act under a host of other pre-conditions for SALT II that can be made both the subject of a joint resolution with the House in ratifying SALT II, and a matter of law in budget legislation.

This would allow the Senate to sound a clear call for continued security that no

wrangling over the terms of SALT II could ever achieve.

It would also be subject to annual debate and change, thus avoiding extremism while reflecting the proper and constitutional role of Congress, yet not challenge the president as to who should negotiate with the USSR.

**C**ONGRESS has a second tool which could be vital in keeping the American people informed about progress in achieving strategic arms security — its ability to mandate reports from the executive branch.

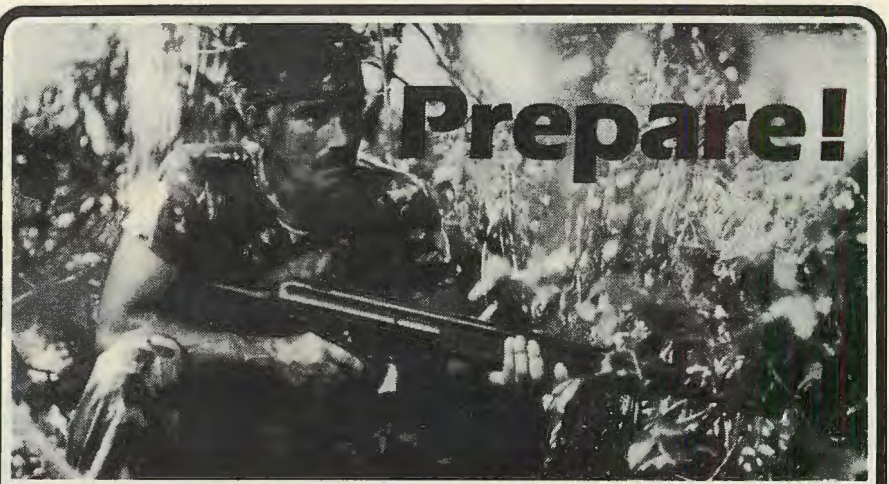
For example, the Congress has the authority to legislate that the president shall publically inform the Congress within 24 hours of any intelligence indication that the Soviets might be violating the SALT II treaty, or of any significant loss of U.S. verification capability. Senators Jake Garn (R-UT) and John Glenn (D-OH) would be especially knowledgeable in framing such riders to the FY80 defense appropriations bill.

Similarly, the Senate can legislate that the president provide an unclassified quarterly or semi-annual "net assessment" of the U.S. and Soviet strategic balance that presents in exact detail specified trends in the balance, and the administration's analysis of the impact of ongoing U.S. and Soviet force improvements. Experts like Senator Sam Nunn, Henry M. Jackson (D-WA) and Howard Baker (R-TN) could set reporting requirements which would protect our intelligence sources, but ensure that the resulting report was objective and complete. This would put an end to the false reassurances of the kind presented in the Pentagon's FY80 *Annual Report* and at the same time, counter the false alarms of the extreme right. It would provide the "open government" and informed public debate necessary to ensure that the U.S./Soviet strategic balance will not continue to deteriorate without becoming a constant public issue.

**T**HE leverage for action is thus clearly available to the Congress, and the members of the Senate who claim to be concerned with national security clearly have the political power to use it. If they waste that leverage and power squabbling over the treaty, they will be far more to blame than President Carter. They, at least, claim to recognize the risks in the growing size of the Soviet strategic threat.

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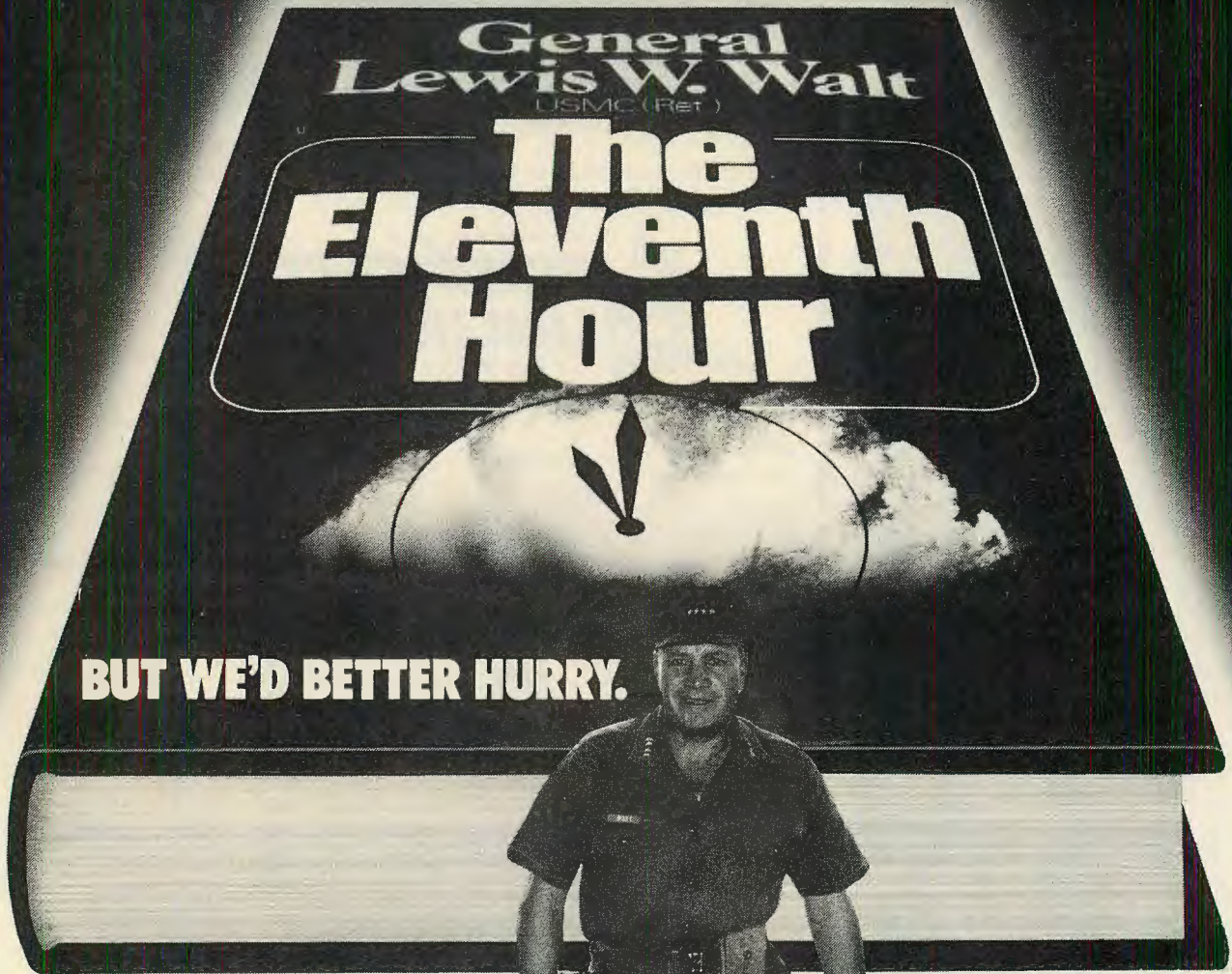


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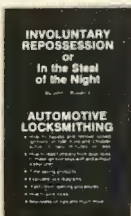
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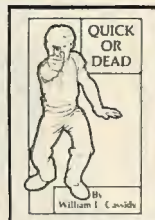


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# 1979 NRA CONVENTION

by Lee Jurras

**N**RA officials at the Association's 1979 convention in San Antonio, Tex., made loud protests about President Jimmy Carter's nomination of Rep. Abner Mikva (D-Ill.) to a post on the U.S. Court of Appeals but Carter ignored their objections and those of others who find the super-liberal Congressman's policies odious.

As SOF went to press it appeared certain that the Senate would routinely approve the nomination and that Mikva would be enjoying a life-time appointment to the Federal bench.

**"We have 27,000 more life members eligible to vote this year."**

At the annual members' meeting, NRA President Lloyd Mustin noted that 27,000 more life members were entitled to vote this year than last year. Of the 260,000-plus life members only some 70,000 actually voted. Mustin openly supported candidates for the Board of Directors who were selected by the nominating committee, but he predicted that the petition method of selection would resume in

the future. There were 58 candidates for 26 vacancies, so for the second year in a row the voters had a solid choice. Harlon Carter has programmed two million members by 1982 and membership is presently running ahead of schedule. Bill Binswanger, NRA treasurer, reported NRA assets at \$39 million, up \$3.6 million from year end 1978, with \$2.5 million of this coming from new members. As it was, nearly everyone left reasonably happy — a change of pace from the past two years.

In attending 16 of the last 17 NRA conventions, I still find it difficult to make the rounds of all exhibits. Meeting and swapping war stories with old friends and industry insiders allows me just about enough time to cover the bulk of the handgun displays.

**Ruger's "Redhawk" looks good.**

The Ruger booth was as crowded as usual. Of particular interest was the first public showing of the "Redhawk," Ruger's 7½-inch-barreled, all stainless D.A. .44 mag revolver. Looks, points and feels good. A half dozen of the model will be

making the rounds this summer to the gun writers; we'll be reporting on it in a later issue. Ruger's President Steve Vogel tells me it'll be October or November before quantities are ready for the commercial market. Of other interest at Sturm & Co. is the appointment of J. Thompson Ruger as vice-president for marketing in the U.S. and Canada. Tom Ruger replaces Ed Nolan, who retired after 22 years of service.

At the Ruger Collectors Association luncheon, members and guests saw a film documentary of Bill Ruger's 30 years devoted to the American shooter. This film, produced and directed by Roger Barlow, depicted John Amber interviewing Ruger in various locations of the Sturm, Ruger facilities, and covered Ruger's activities from his World War II days at the Auto Ordnance Corp. to the present. A truly fine film commemorating one of the greats in the American ordnance field.

Shortly before his death, Dan Wesson told me he hoped to have his .44 mag ready by mid-summer '79. Wesson Arms plant manager Fred Hill tells me they are now realistically looking at December '79



for writer samples, and early 1980 for production. Wesson Arms did have on display and ready for delivery their new “.22 Rimfire.”

Marcy and Terry Hudson of Crown City Arms displayed and answered questions on their line of autoloaders. They advertise, “the most complete line of automatic pistols,” all models, both steel and stainless, light weight and standard weights, either fixed or adjustable sights. The “new look” in the Crown City line includes magazines with removable floor-plates and followers with front and rear guides, enlarged ejection ports, beveled magazine wells and wide spur target hammers. The fixed sight models utilize the new MMC, white-outline rear sight and white-bar cross-ramp front blade.

I visited with John Bianchi and Ray Chapman who had just arrived from the first annual Bianchi Invitational combat shoot at Chapman’s new facilities in Columbia, MO. Bianchi says he was pleased with the results of the first showing and assured bigger and better things with a whole year to get ready for the second bash. (See Ken Hackathorn’s report on this year’s match, SOF, Oct. ’79.)

Ron Powers and Jimmy Clark shared a booth, displaying their latest developments. While Powers specializes in PPC guns, his work carries over into IHMSA Un-limited guns, as well as custom combat variations. Clark’s Bullseye-type custom guns and combat conversions are well known.

The word “devlen” is of Scottish origin and means “to strike a severe or stunning blow,” thus the name of the Devel Corporation’s 9mm parabellum conversion.

NOVEMBER/79



ABOVE: Austin Behlert (left), well-known custom pistolsmith, shows Harry Reeves (right) a custom Model 29. Reeves was National All-Around Pistol champion six times. BELOW: James E. Clark (left), national pistol champion, displays his specialized Ruger PPC revolver. Ron Power (right) shows a IHMSA Un-limited XP-100 conversion.



Charlie Kelsey, president of Devel, operated out of the *American Handgunner* booth, displaying the company’s excellent combat conversion, based on the S&W Model 39. The Devel Corporation’s conversion is among the most complete combat conversions on the market today.

The *American Handgunner* booth was manned by Jerry Rakusan and had an excellent display of custom handguns by nationally known custom pistolsmiths.

Austin and Frank Behlert of the Custom Gunshop, Union, N.Y., had their custom variations and accessories on

display. Of particular interest was a 2½-inch round-butt Model 29 S&W. This model will be offered by Sentinel Arms as a limited edition conversion of your S&W Model 29 shipped to them. More on this item in a later issue of SOF. I am presently doing a test and evaluation on a preproduction prototype.

With permission of George C. Nonte Jr.’s family, Lin Alexiou of Trapper Gun Inc. is building a combat .45 to be called the George C. Nonte 200, honoring the late, great handgunner. Limited to 200 guns, this custom variation will be built around the Colt Commander. Special features include slide tightening and lapping, Trapper low profile rib with S&W sights, frame revamped with hooked trigger guard and memory groove finger rest, extended safety and slide release. Also included are Staghorn grips and 24 kt. gold-plated bushing wrench serialized to match gun. Guns will be serial numbered from 1-200. Nonte’s mother, Mrs. Mary E. Nonte, and each of his five children will receive a gun with their names engraved in place of the serial number. Individuals interested in this commemorative model can contact Trapper Sales Co., 28019 Harper, St. Clair Shores, MI 48081.

A short visit with Hubert Zink, executive director of Heckler & Koch Inc., with plans for dinner on the last night of the show to discuss what’s on the drawing boards at H&K, unfortunately had to be cancelled, as Zink had to leave unexpectedly for Germany.

O.F. Mossberg Co. spokesmen were mum about delivery dates on their Com-

# Adventure Quartermaster

by N.E. MacDougald

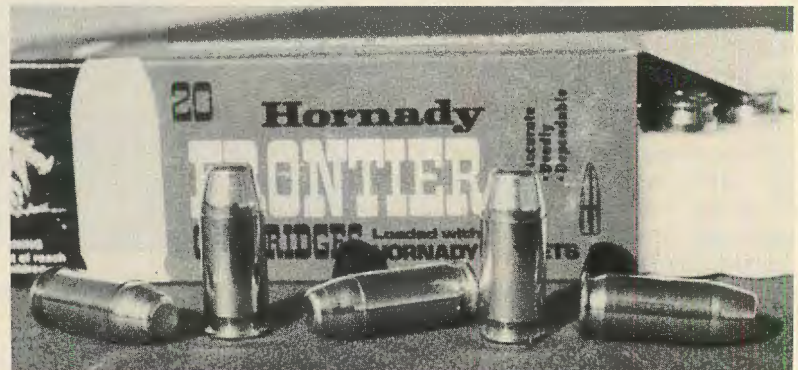
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## NEW BLADE FROM ASP

*Armament Systems Products, Unltd.*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 18595, Atlanta, GA 30328, offers the Vindicator. The knife, designed by Danny Thornton, has the following features, according to ASP's Chris McLoughlin: a hand-ground 4-3/8-inch stainless double-edged blade. The 440C alloy steel was heat-treated to a Rockwell hardness of 59. The 4½-inch black micarta handle features a stainless lanyard grommet. The guard is also stainless and accommodates either a slashing or a stabbing grip.

Vindicator's sheath works well on belt or in boot or on shoulder harness. Each knife is numbered on an escutcheon plate in the handle. The Vindicator is also available in a single-edged model with a false edge. Either model costs \$48.



## HORNADY JTC AMMO

*Hornady Manufacturing Co.*, Dept. SOF, P.O. Box 1848, Grand Island, NE 68801, (303) 382-1390, now offers a new bullet shape known as the Jacketed Truncated Cone (JTC). The 230-grain .45 ACP projectile, claims Hornady, is more accurate because of its shape. Rumor has it that the JTC is more effective on live targets than conventional hardball. Available as components, the projectiles retail for \$8.50 per hundred; as loaded cartridges they sell for \$6.70 per box of 20.



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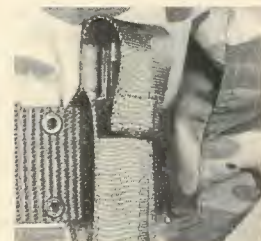
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# SANDINISTA TRIUMPH

## Will Somoza Downfall Mean Spread of Communism in Central America?

by Terry Edwards

*Editor's Note: As the most vicious civil war in this hemisphere approached its bloody climax, SOF mounted an operation to come up with a balanced view of the war in Nicaragua.*

*Terry Edwards, a free-lance writer who has been a frequent SOF contributor, left his home in Canada on a contract assignment to cover the war as best he could and elected to enter via the back door of Costa Rica "because I figured that the other side was more than adequately covered by the conventional news media."*

*As most readers now know, the Sandinistas never did succeed in establishing a temporary capitol in Rivas which successfully held out under the leadership of Commandante Bravo until Somoza fled the country. At the last moment before press time SOF could not determine whether the Sandinistas were still accepting volunteers for their fledgling regular army as Edwards reported, but judging by past experience in Cuba they probably are not and even if they were, it would be a good idea to forget that adventure.*


*Remember what happened to some non-Marxist volunteers who served with*

*Castro, including at least one American. They were later executed. And Edwards knows whereof he writes when he advises of dreadful physical conditions. Upon returning home he was stricken with a variety of tropical ailments and bedridden for two weeks.*

*SOF Martial Arts Editor Rafael Lima was scheduled to evaluate the Somoza side of the conflict but was sidelined in Miami due to visa problems.*

*Shortly after Somoza's flight, SOF Editor and Publisher Robert K. Brown flew into Miami, where he linked up with Tom Dunkin, who flew in from Fort Pierce, and with Miami staffers Ralph Eden, Marty Casey, Jay Mallin and Lima.*

*SOF staffers in Boulder pulled three previously set and laid-out stories from the magazine to leave space for these last-minute-before-deadline developments. As copy flowed in from several points, chaos reigned in the news room but editors and artists managed to process the new stories and photos, with the final work accomplished minutes before the printer arrived to pick the issue up.*



**S**OUTHERN Nicaragua, June and July, 1979 — hazy clouds at 3000 feet. When the sound comes, there is a hush. Those inside come out and scan the sky. Seconds later a tiny Cessna materializes above. A second follows. They circle leisurely, staying high — out of range of the .50 HMG anti-aircraft weapons concealed in houses and brush cover. Safe from reprisal, they take their time. The first hint of the strike comes from the flash under one wing.

A dirty streak of smoke stains the sky as rockets hurtle groundward. They strike in sequence, sounding like some massive erratic machine gun. The planes bank and dip, using each batch of rockets carefully, selecting bunkers, buildings and likely targets below.

After 10 minutes a new aircraft joins them. Its wing identifies it as a C-47. There is no side door. On the ground a .50 opens up in forlorn hope. The ground gunner has no tracer to guide his shots and soon gives up. Meanwhile the C-47 door gunner sends stream after stream of bullets to rake the landscape below. The



Sandinistas, armed with .50 cal. Browning, FNs and M-16s, celebrate Somoza's flight. Photo credit: Emillo: AP

attack goes on for another 15 minutes, then one by one the planes disappear through the clouds. A single Cessna hangs back to direct the first shots of the 81mm mortar fire that follows.

In the north of Nicaragua, soldiers of the F.S.L.N. (Sandinista National Liberation Front) have swept Somoza's National Guard from the towns and countryside. But until recently the south presented a different picture. Sandinista forces held a narrow band of Nicaragua along the Costa Rican border with roughly 1,000 dug-in men and women. Facing them were an equal number of the National Guard. Behind the Guardsmen is the town of Rivas, announced by the Sandinista to be their future seat of the provisional government. An airlift of 300 troops from Managua bolstered the garrison in town and troops between the border and Rivas greatly hampered rebel thrusts.

This is the second major Sandinista offensive to overthrow Nicaraguan President General Anastasio ("Tacho") Somoza. The first, launched in 1978, was a disaster for the rebels. After a few initial



Anastasio Somoza, deposed President of Nicaragua, displays dejected expression shortly after he arrived in Miami. Photo credit: AP.



Nicaraguan National Guard sniper with Israeli helmet and M-1 Garand. Guardsmen ran out of ammo due to U.S. pressures. Photo credit: AP.

gains, they were savagely beaten down by the 12,000-man National Guard. It was a simple case of too much, too fast, a common error in guerrilla warfare. Constant harassment turned the Guard into a vengeful, brutal force, driving Nicaraguans to the guerrilla ranks. The

Guard was spread thin, world opinion was turning on Somoza and the time seemed right to switch from hit-and-run guerrilla tactics to conventional warfare. It was too early.

"We lost hundreds ... thousands of fighters, then," said one survivor. "But

we learned from our mistakes. We went back to the forests and this time we have an army!"

The first steps in building the new army were re-arming and training. Sandinista arms buyers, assisted by well-connected Costa Rican and other Central American businessmen, scoured for weapons. Their efforts were adequate, but hardly professional. From the U.S. came a hodge-podge of burnt-out .45s, suicide specials and a scattering of highly-coveted Browning Hi-Powers, P-38s and other quality autos. Early model Belgian-made FN/FAL rifles appeared. Rumors stated these were the guns bought by Castro from FN before he turned to the Soviet camp, but FALs are so widely distributed now that without serial number references proof is impossible. Anyway, Cuba now has 250 combat troops inside Nicaragua and has trained at least 300 Sandinista instructors in Cuba, according to highly placed Costa Rican sources of impeccable authority, sources so well-placed in Costa Rica that they cannot be further identified.

A batch of World War II German ponos arrived, including the still-excellent MG-42 LMG and the Bergman SMG. From the U.S. came M-1 Garands and carbines. Israeli Galils and Uzis, and U.S. M-16A1s, captured during the first offensive, helped fill the ranks. Specific sources for most of these weapons were impossible to determine but there was much talk in Costa Rica, by those who should know, that Venezuelan sources were major suppliers. All in all, a logistics nightmare.

Other weapons entered Sandinista ranks by purchase, gift and capture — Chinese-made RPG launchers and their grenades, 75mm recoilless rifles, 81 and 120mm mortars, and at least one 105mm howitzer. Uniforms and equipment were

bought and taken from National Guard dead. Much of the infantry clothing and equipment is U.S.-made; some can be bought from the pages of this magazine and likely was! Meanwhile, other Central American countries were growing less shy about supporting the rebels.

Panama opened her doors as a way station for guerrillas training in Cuba and equipment arriving from around the world. Venezuela chipped in with cold cash. Costa Rica evacuated a large salient of her territory, leaving it as a guerrilla sanctuary and allowing free traffic in fighters and equipment. When SOF arriv-

ed at San Jose, airport customs was tearing everyone apart. But when the official glanced at the pile of combat gear, he merely smiled and indicated a search would not be required.

Now trained and re-equipped, the Sandinista set out again. They had learned their lessons. Strategy was professional. Simultaneously guerrillas attacked throughout Nicaragua, sending the National Guard into a frenzy, trying to defend all areas at one time. This forced the Guard to thin out. With the roads easily interdicted by the guerrillas and little

**Two Sandinista guerrillas, one armed with 30.06 M-1 Garand (foreground), other with H&K G33 blast away at open doorway in Leon, Nicaragua's second largest city, shortly before end of blood-drenched civil war. Dead Nicaragua National Guardsman lies in front of door. Photo credit: UPI.**



### **LATEST REPORT: DEATH OF SOF STAFFER MICHAEL D. ECHANIS**

*While interviewing members of the elite Nicaraguan Infantry Officer's School who were receiving treatment for serious wounds in a Miami hospital, SOF found a young officer who conducted an investigation of the death of SOF staffer Mike Echanis. He also supervised the recovery of Echanis' body and those of the others who perished with him in a September 1978 plane crash. His report follows:*

I was participating in combat operations near the border of Costa Rica when I received a radio call from Lt. Col. Anastasio Somoza [General Somoza's son and OIC of the Nicaraguan Basic Infantry School—eds.]. He instructed me to investigate the plane crash in which Echanis died. I proceeded to the river in which the plane had crashed, obtained the services of several SCUBA personnel and four

boats and subsequently supervised recovery of four bodies from the submerged aircraft.

As you know, the others that died with Echanis were General Allegret; Mike's friend and second in command, Charles Saunders; and Nguyen van Nguyen. The Vietnamese's only identification was a Special Forces ID card — nothing else. [Nguyen served 10 years with SF in Special Operations Group (SOG) and had been recruited by Echanis as an adviser a few months before —eds.]

From the wreckage and fragment wounds on the bodies, we determined that at some point Israeli hand grenades on board the aircraft had detonated.

Farmers from the area reported they had heard the plane's engine miss and then it plunged into a steep dive.

The plane suddenly began to pull out of its dive. There was an explosion and a wing came off — or vice versa. I was

not able to determine which event occurred first. The plane then started to break up and plunged into the river.

No one aboard survived.

*No one will ever know for sure, of course, but it is possible to speculate on what might have happened aboard that ill-fated airplane. Could the non-crew personnel aboard have been dropping those grenades on Sandinista guerrillas below in Costa Rica and one of the grenades exploded prematurely? A possibility.*

*Could turbulence have caused a malfunction of the aircraft? Also a possibility.*

*Or could there have been an accidental discharge of one of the numerous firearms aboard? Possible too. It is unclear whether the explosion preceded the aircraft's erratic performance or followed it. There are many unanswered questions in the death of Mike Echanis and Nguyen, two old soldiers who died as they lived, in the midst of action.*

airlift capability, the Guard found itself too thin on the ground for offensive actions. At this point Sandinista forces concentrated on one garrisoned town after another, chalking up a string of victories designed to isolate Somoza in his capital. Somoza drew the Guard back to Managua and abandoned the north. The Sandinista intention was then to take the capital itself, but the uprising there was premature and events in the south threw the schedule off. First, Rivas failed to collapse after three bitter, bloody assaults. Supplies reaching southern Nicaragua at the time of this writing are being carried by mule up into the mountains, through the snipers, to bypass the Guard.

In Managua the premature uprising ended fatally when the National Guard pulled out the stops and brought their artillery into the streets to blast the slums clear. The guerrillas wisely withdrew from the city.

In the south the war has been a curious mixture. The tactics at Rivas have been largely conventional: soften up and punch. Around the Guard's area to the south in early July, shelters, trenches, and mortar barrages lent a World War I atmosphere, and along the border area raids and snipers recreated a mini-Vietnam. The terrain here is well suited to guerrillas. This is the rainy season and twice a day the rains come to drench the forests and fill the dozens of rivers flowing from the nearby mountains to the Pacific. The rugged surface is blanketed with eye-proof foliage and the clouds and mist severely cut down on any use of the tiny airforce left to Somoza before his resignation. The Pan-American highway is largely intact, blasted and cratered, but passable to the guerrillas except where the Guard lay across it north of the border.

Several Guard efforts to cut the Panama-Costa Rica-Nicaragua supply line failed. One last attempt, a patrol of 40 men sent into Costa Rica to blow two of the U.S.-built slab-type bridges, was ambushed. The guerrillas unofficially reported 39 killed, one captured. Off the Pan-Am highway roads are negotiable only by four-wheel drive, and if you go into the rain forest, take a machete. Lizards and snakes of all sizes abound and mosquitoes — yes, some carry malaria — swarm with the flies.

The stifling heat is intense. Sweat, humidity and rain together mean you are rarely dry and a day or two in the region leaves you with that musty smell any jungle-crawler will remember.

Patrolling is a dangerous job. The concealment is so good, that he who gets there first, wins. It has been a small arms fight in the forests because of both the lack of heavier and exotic weapons and of tactical demands. FAL rifles are appreciated for their heavy hitting power against concrete-block construction, but disliked for their size, weight of ammo

and kick. Many troops are young and inexperienced with firearms. They do far better with lighter weapons, such as the M-1 carbine, 16 or Galil, that don't give the novice instant flinch. In the wide variety of conditions almost any weapon has a place.

### **“We got one tank with Molotov cocktails.”**

For anti-tank work the Sandinista have used RPGs and Molotov cocktails. Two tanks have been taken out:

“We got one with Molotov cocktails. We must have put 10 gallons on that bastard [a Sherman] before he lit up. It cost us 12 of our boys — 12 for one tank — but we got the bastards.” The other Sherman went up from a single RPG hit. Armor is hardly an issue now. In early July, the Guard could only put out one Sherman tank and a handful of armored cars.

Until mid-July the National Guard hung together well. The only reported defections were officers. As the Guardsmen saw it, they could fight to the death, or surrender and then die. The Sandinista see things the same way. Both sides made propaganda noise about well-treated prisoners, but no one believed it. In one case a Guard officer appeared after his capture to state he was treated well and was willing to join the guerrillas. Quite embarrassing for Somoza. The Sandinista have their embarrassing moments as well, like the Costa Rican convict who escaped jail, joined the Sandinista, got issued a weapon and promptly returned to Costa Rica to

## COMING SOON

**S**OF staffers in Miami have located and interviewed a number of Cubans who fought for the Somoza forces in the recently concluded Nicaraguan revolution and members of the Nicaraguan army as well.

They were being treated for wounds in a Miami hospital, where they had registered under assumed names.

One of the Cubans, an adviser to Somoza for the past 10 months, was an old acquaintance of SOF staffers from the anti-Castro days of the early '60s.

SOF holed up in a Holiday Inn, drew the blinds and debriefed this Cuban exile over a three-day period. His analysis of the real reasons for the fall of Somoza and the potential Marxist peril to Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala — and ultimately Mexico — will appear in an upcoming issue of *Soldier of Fortune*. Look for it, because chances are you will not learn elsewhere of what really transpired behind the scenes in the cantinas, cities, villages and jungles of central America.

resume his bank-robbing career — wielding an auto weapon.

By the time this story sees print the situation in Nicaragua will undoubtedly be settled. But in early July, though Sandinista victory seemed certain, both sides were still straining to make a knock-out punch. As the struggle continues, Marxist factions of the Sandinista grow stronger and the moderates weaker. Cuban troops arrive for combat and small covered trucks roll north from Panama each night, carrying food, ammo and weapons. Most people say there will be no “night of the long knives” following victory and no new political war to settle the new government, but a few say they will not be surprised. . . .

### **“Many volunteers are getting shot on their first day in combat.”**

“Many volunteers [moderates] are getting shot on their first day in combat. They have no training; it's very bad.” Further talk hints that most arms and equipment, along with Cuban troops and instructors, go to Marxist groups while the moderates are being starved out. New recruits naturally gravitate to the best armed and led forces, further reducing moderate influence. The United States is not regarded as friendly.

The fact Israel is supplying the Somoza government is taken as proof of America's intentions: “If the U.S. said stop, Israel would stop!” says one man.

The U.S. press has been maligned as CIA or spies for Somoza, but the real reason for hostility in Nicaragua and Costa Rica is simpler. A U.S. writer, angered at being stopped miles from the border, wrote that northern Costa Rica was being run by “foreigners” (the Sandinista). In embarrassment, Costa Rica had to move back into its evacuated salient, a situation which did nothing to please the guerrillas.

By the third week of June, the border was sealed to the press, except for Costa Ricans and at least one carload of Russian and East German reporters. SOF got in on their coattails. Unfortunately, we also got caught at it. Bad news, the Costa Rican press had just printed an erroneous, and unflattering, article about SOF magazine, successfully making it a household word. There followed the usual antics of waving rifles, searching the Land Cruiser, etc.

Considering what the Costa Rican press had said about SOF and those who work with it, Sandinista behavior was polite and restrained.

If the struggle still continues when this story sees print, some readers may be considering a bit of travel. The Sandinistas accept volunteers. There is a 700-strong international brigade operating in the south, composed of Costa Ricans and Panamanians for the most part, with a

scattering of soldiers from Venezuela, Columbia, Chile and even a few Spaniards, French and Germans. There are also a number of Costa Ricans who served in Vietnam with U.S. forces. While the Marxist factions don't need anyone's help, the moderates will gratefully accept offers of instruction — if you can make contact with them. Be prepared to do a lot of hanging around before you are trusted. Again, no money.

Just about every disease possible is floating through Nicaragua right now, so shots and malaria pills are a must. Water must be treated with purification tabs and no food (if you find any!) should be eaten cold or raw. Internally, Nicaragua is a disaster. There is little food, and no medicine, its industry is shattered and major crops of cotton and coffee are unplanted. The Sandinista are a well-disciplined force but bands of armed looters are also common. Don't go unless you speak Spanish.



## AFTER THE FALL

by Jay Mallin

**F**OLLOWING the revolutionary victory in Cuba at the beginning of 1959, would-be insurgents from virtually every country in Latin America flooded into that country seeking Fidel Castro's assistance in undertaking similar activities in their own countries.

Among the visitors were several groups of Nicaraguans. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Argentinian who became Cuba's grand master of subversion, selected an ideologically suitable Nicaraguan group and sent it to newly established Camp Granma for training. Within months, the Nicaraguans launched guerrilla activities in Nicaragua. On 28 May 1959, for example, Cuban air force transport No. 508 flew a cargo of arms into Nicaragua. They were turned over to Marcial Eguiluz, a Nicaraguan communist.

The initial efforts failed; the guerrillas were easily dispatched by the Nicaraguan National Guard. But for 20 years, Castro continued his support of the Sandinistas — a Nicaraguan Marxist-controlled group — and for 20 years the Sandinistas sought to win control of Nicaragua.

And the Nicaraguan adventure is but one phase of a hemisphere-wide Cuban subversive program. It even extends into the United States, where several times Cuban diplomats have been ousted because of their activities. For 20 years, Castro continued his program of subversion. Until this year, he had chalked up no real successes (the election in Chile of his friend Salvador Allende was a temporary triumph, but destroyed by a Chilean army coup before Allende could consolidate his control).

Now, finally Castro has a victory. The Sandinistas have won control of Nicaragua.

Fidel Castro, reaching across the Atlantic, was able to win, with Soviet support, a military victory in Angola. This was accomplished through the outright utilization of the Cuban army. In Nicaragua, Castro gained his victory through subversion by Sandinista surrogates. They succeeded in defeating the well-armed, disciplined, trained and highly motivated National Guard. How did the Sandinistas accomplish this? Through the indirect — and perhaps direct — assistance of Jimmy Carter and the U.S. State Department.

Nicaraguan Dictator Anastasio Somoza became a prime target of the Liberal human rights exponents in the Carter administration, including Carter himself. They wanted Somoza out. The significance of this action in real political terms meant little or nothing to them. Somoza must go, no matter what the cost. The United States not only cut off its own military and other aid to Nicaragua, it also pressured countries that were supplying weapons, notably Israel, into halting assistance to Nicaragua. Somoza and the National Guard were faced with an almost complete arms embargo. The guardsmen were running out of ammunition with which to fight. There are even reports that the United States quietly slipped weapons to the Sandinistas to win their confidence.

The United States, which for years helped Latin American countries fend off Castro's subversive efforts, now made possible his first subversive victory.

The Sandinistas are now in control. They have their red and black flags (the old colors of Europe's anarchists — the same colors Castro used during the Cuban revolution), they have suspended Nicaragua's constitution and laws (as Castro did when he came to power), they have set up "popular tribunals" (again along the Cuban model). There *are* moderates in the new government of Nicaragua — there *were* moderates in the first revolutionary government of Nicaragua.

What happened in Cuba will probably serve as a model for the complete Sandinista takeover of Nicaragua. The Fidelistas/communists had to do away with the remnants of the regular Cuban army. The dissolution of the Nicaraguan National Guard has already solved this problem for the Sandinistas.

The Sandinistas can be expected to follow the Cuban blueprint (as detailed in the book, *Fortress Cuba*, published in the mid-'60s). The moderates will be squeezed out of the government one by one. The Sandinista/communists will salami-tactic their way into control of the unions, the educational system, the press and eventually all sectors of Nicaraguan life. Cuban society was more complicated than is that of relatively backward Nicaragua. The takeover of Nicaragua will probably

be simpler to accomplish — and will take less time.

Hardly were the Fidelistas in control of Cuba when they turned the island into a base for the attempted exportation of revolution to other countries. Can the Sandinistas, tightly bound to Havana, be expected to do less with their country? Hardly.

## "Subversives are a permanent risk to stable democratic regimes."

Honduran President Policarpo Paz Garcia said a few days ago: "If we take into account that there is a certain amount of universal fraternity among subversives, then there is a permanent risk to stable democratic regimes."

Encouraged by their victory, there is little doubt that the Sandinistas will be happy to provide support to Marxist groups in other countries, just as they received support from Cuba. As for Castro, he must be laughing at how Washington handed him his first subversive victory in 20 years; he is not likely to end his efforts. Encouraged by the triumph in Nicaragua, he will surely press on.

In Washington, the head of the Cuban interest section, Ramon Sanchez Parodi, stated openly that Cuban aid to the Sandinistas "intensified as the struggle intensified." Furthermore, he acknowledged publicly, Cuba is supporting (Marxist) revolutionary movements in Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. No wonder that Honduran President Paz Garcia says he is "very alarmed" about what happened in Nicaragua.

## Castro's future role in Central America includes continuing subversion.

The situation in Central America today is bleak indeed for the non-communist countries and for the United States. As Castro looks out from Havana he sees this:

- Panama, a country which willingly worked with Cuba in supplying arms to the Sandinistas and permitted the transshipment of Cuban weapons to the Nicaraguan rebels. Panama is not communist but there is little doubt that communist elements are showing restraint until the U.S. Congress finally approves the Canal treaty.

- Costa Rica — A democratic nation which pusillanimously ceded national territory to the Sandinistas so they could use it as a base for their assault on Nicaragua. The Soviet and Cuban embassies in San Jose play a major behind-the-scenes role in Costa Rica.

- Nicaragua — Under Sandinista control.

- El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras — Three remaining Central American na-



tions, already wracked to varying degrees by unrest. Castro sees here vulnerable fields for his continuing subversive campaign. And, highly important, Castro sees in Washington an inept, do-gooder administrator that probably will not act to prevent his further moves.

### **Carter's response: "Will you help me get rid of Somoza?"**

The prospect ahead is that Castro will expand and speed up his subversive campaign. Bad days are ahead for Central America. And with a growing communist presence in Central America, the communist pressure on Mexico — with its vital oil supplies — will also increase. When Carter visited Mexico recently, Mexican President Lopez Portillo tried to warn him about this, saying that despite Mexico's public anti-Somoza postures, the Mexican government was concerned about the growing Cuban presence. Carter listened but evidently understood not a word of what the Mexican president told him.

He turned to Lopez Portillo and asked him, "Will you help me get rid of Somoza?" The Mexican president figuratively threw up his hands, amazed at Carter's political naivete.

The loss of China became a major issue in American politics. It is quite likely that the loss of Nicaragua — and a growing struggle throughout Central America — will weigh heavily in the next presidential election in the United States.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Jay Mallin of Miami, author of this month's penetrating analysis of recent developments in Nicaragua, is one of the nation's leading authorities on Latin America. He has covered the region since 1950 and has been a *Time* Magazine correspondent since 1956. Mallin is the author of six books, including three major works on Latin America, and is a frequent lecturer at the Pentagon and military schools on the subjects of terrorism and Latin American affairs.

—Bob Poos.



#### **SECOND CHANCE 180 SHOOT**

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## **NICARAGUAN "BED PEOPLE"**

**N**ICARAGUAN "bed people," the Latin American equivalent of the homeless Vietnamese, are latest among the world's political refugees to seek sanctuary in the U.S. Some 60 to 70 of deposed President Anastasio Somoza's troops, sent to Miami for medical treatment before collapse of his regime, are uncertain of their future. They say they can't go home again because they face certain death from the Sandinista guerrillas.

What the U.S. attitude will be is unknown. An Immigration and Naturalization Service official in Miami said July 27 that he was unaware of the patients' presence in Miami. "But," said Raymond Morris, "all Nicaraguan refugees have until Dec. 31, 1979, to decide whether to go voluntarily to another country or to try to stay here."

Normally the Nicaragua National Guardsmen, all wounded in action, would have been treated and returned to Nicaragua. But the government which sent them here no longer exists and the patients are afraid to go home again.

"I cannot go back to my country," said a 27-year-old former first lieutenant. He is the last of the war wounded to get out of Nicaragua. He arrived in Miami July 14, just three days before Somoza quit.

This man suffered a bullet wound in the left leg that destroyed his kneecap. He will be hospitalized for one more month. "The doctors say I will walk, but I will not run again," the young lieutenant said.

He has served 11 years in the Nicaragua National Guard, which included

four years of military academy, and seven of active duty. He attended basic infantry officers school at Ft. Benning. "I learned English at Lackland AFB." He has had parachute and military intelligence training with U.S. military units in Panama.

As to what his military career qualifies him to do in civilian life, the lieutenant said, "I can do many things. The most important thing is to earn money to live."

The lieutenant is single. His mother and father were still in Nicaragua at last report but he had no inkling of their fate after the Sandinista guerrillas won. A committee has been formed in Miami by Nicaraguans aided by Cuban exiles, to care for the "bed people" as well as civilian refugees. The group's name is the Humanitarian Committee for Nicaraguan Refugees in Miami, at 4315 NW 7th Street, Suite 31 & 32. This non-profit group was hastily organized in mid-July.

Committee spokesman Antonio Acevedo said, "We are trying to help them any way possible, to find them a place to stay, and we hope to get some money from Washington."

Miami's exile community was largely instrumental in forming the new refugee aid group. Anselmo Alliegro, a former civilian aide to ex-president Somoza, is active in the resettlement effort. Alliegro fled Cuba as a teenager. His father held several high government offices during Batista's tenures in Cuba. He is now in his 30s and a U.S. citizen. "I, and we, know what they're up against," Alliegro said of Nicaraguan refugees. "We are trying to interest anyone possible."

—Tom Dunkin



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**T**APS has sounded for a giant of a soldier, a legend among brave men, an unselfish hero who came out of retirement to give America its one moment of pride in the debacle called Iran.

Colonel Arthur D. "Bull" Simons: those who served with him called him fearless. "Death," he used to say, "is not that far away from me by other causes." He died May 21 in Dallas' Baylor Hospital, three months after risking death once again to free men he did not know from a foreign prison. He believed in unorthodox operations, and proved at age 60 how effective they can be when he led a hand-picked team of 15 men into Iran and organized a mob assault on an Iranian prison in which two American employees of computer magnate H. Ross Perot's Texas-based Electronic Data Systems were being held hostage for a reported \$12.75 million ransom demanded by the Iranian government. In a crisis when bureaucracy and conventional diplomacy were powerless to act, Bull Simons acted unconventionally — and brought the men home. With them, he freed almost 11,000 Iranian citizens imprisoned in the same walls, "the biggest jail break in history" (see "Who Dares Wins," SOF, June, '79).

It was typical of him that he refused payment for the caper.

Bull Simons: if you wove his life into a book of fiction, publishers would turn it down because its plot would be too implausible. Indeed, when I wrote a book about just *one* of his exploits, the editor-in-chief of one of America's largest publishing houses told me, "If you had turned this manuscript in as fiction, I'd have sent you a rejection slip — it's too incredible."

That exploit, the 1970 raid into Son Tay prison 23 miles from downtown Hanoi, proved abortive: when Simons' 56-man team landed there in the dead of night, they found the camp empty of POWs. But Simons got his men in and out without a single serious casualty; he showed North Vietnam that America could operate with impunity in its own back yard, and so terrified North Vietnam's leaders that they might lose their biggest bargaining chip in the Paris peace talks — America's POWs — that they quickly rounded up all the POWs from remote, dingy, outlying camps and brought them all together into downtown Hanoi's infamous Hoa Loa prison, where security would be better.

Some of those men had been in captivity for 5½ years; many had been confined in solitary, broken by torture, for two or more years; some had known only one other American cellmate in all that time they'd been captive; one man had survived 2½ years held prisoner in a *cave* in Laos, alone over 900 days in a damp, dark, vermin-infested corner of hell. Some of the prisoners had gone insane.

# Requiem for a Warrior

Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons

(1918-1979)

by Benjamin F. Schemmer  
Editor, *Armed Forces Journal International*

Suddenly, these men found themselves crowded together into cells with 20 to 40 of their fellow pilots and soldiers; for the first time in years, they could talk openly, not risk torture communicating through the POWs' "tap code"; they could organize, treat each other's wounds, teach each other, unite, bargain as a unified force with their captors. Morale soared among men whose spirits had reached, in many cases, the breaking point. And they knew, as word of the raid on Son Tay spread among them, that America cared, that the United States would risk anything to bring them home.

"There's one thing you've got to understand about Son Tay," one of its prisoners told me when he came home: "They called it 'the raid that failed'. What you've got to understand is that 'the raid that failed' *saved our sanity*."

The POWs called it "the greatest operation of the war," the one thing that contributed most to their morale, that was "essential" to their well being.

His men, of course, had no idea of all that, the night he brought them back unscathed from the heart of North Vietnam; but Bull Simons knew how much they had wanted to bring those POWs home, and soon after they recovered in Thailand, he had them assembled and told them:

"I know you are disappointed. We had the place right by the ass. But you have nothing to feel bad about, nothing to be ashamed of. You did your job and you did it as well as any combat commander could ask of you. We don't have a thing to be ashamed of. The operation, as far as what *you* did, was successful. You could not have done it better."

Asked how his men had reacted, Simons told me later: "Hell, I wasn't looking for any reaction. It was just something I wanted to say. I didn't give a goddamn what their reaction was."

Nor did he give a damn about qualms Washington was having by the time he was rushed back to brief the Secretary of Defense and the President on the raid. The bureaucracy was shook up, apoplectic that raiding an empty prison camp deep in the heart of North Vietnam would make it look like only America could screw up a two-car funeral. Simons learned from his friend and planner of the Son Tay foray, Army Brigadier General Don-

ald Blackburn, that Washington was probably more shook up than the North Vietnamese had been.

Simons asked him, "What are you telling me, that we got a *black eye*. I'm not mad at anybody. I thought the thing was *great*. Okay, so we didn't get 'em. Christ, the thing was worth doing *without* getting them."

He was a lot smarter than some people gave him credit for at first glance.

They called him "Bull" for a lot of reasons. One was that he *looked* like a bull (although people would come to learn that he was a very gentle, sensitive man): huge shoulders on a 5-foot, 11-inch, 190-pound, granite-like frame; a thick neck, receding hairline, bushy eyebrows, a wide, hawklike nose, big ears, deep creases curving from his nostrils around his mouth and down to his chin.

## HIS LEGENDS

Missouri-born, a ROTC journalism graduate, he became a soldier in 1941. He commanded B Company of the Sixth Ranger Battalion in the invasion of the Philippines, having transferred from pack artillery duty in New Guinea after fighting with 75mm howitzers and "a long line of mules." (Later in life he would joke that the first order he ever issued in combat was to a first sergeant, telling him how to make a jackass more comfortable.)

Three days before the invasion of Leyte, he took a team of Navy frog men in to blow up the Japanese mines sewn in Leyte Gulf. That done, he took his men the very next night to knock out a radar station on a nearby island. For assault boats, all Simons could find was "a bunch of goddamn canoes" and a Philippine guide who "was smart enough to jump out as soon as we left shore." All the canoes sank; Simons stole more, landed on the wrong island, carried his canoes to the other side and paddled to the objective — where he found another Ranger force had been badly mauled trying to knock out the same radar.

Simons decided to lead what was now left of his 80-man company, 15 Rangers, up the backside of their objective, a cliff. They climbed it "by our fingernails, you know, I mean straight up." By mid-morning, Simons reached the top, saw a young Japanese soldier taking his drawers down for a crap about 10 feet away, mus-

ed, "That's too bad," shot his first enemy face to face, and supervised the unscheduled disintegration of a key threat to the invasion force.

He fought in Korea, did the things a soldier does in peacetime, joined the Special Forces, and visited Vietnam four times. The visits never once involved a conventional operation.

His first job there, in 1960, was to organize a clandestine army in Laos. Simons picked 107 men, code-named "White Star" teams, but found when he arrived with them that there was no one to train because Laos' "army" was a palace guard, ill-equipped and unsuited to cope with North Vietnam's increasingly frequent and brutal cross-border forays. Nor would the Laotian government recruit an army. But it was obvious to Simons that some kind of army was needed, so he kidnapped one.

Simons' teams roamed all over the country, impressing thousands of Meo tribesmen uprooted by the turmoil in their land. He put them in compounds behind barbed wire, fed and clothed them, and taught them to soldier. They proved eager to learn: under Bull Simons, life had a purpose, and they were even getting paid. Simons eventually recruited 12 *battalions* of Meo "volunteers," and they proved such tough opposition that North Vietnam soon lost much of its appetite for the cross-border raids that had torn the country to shreds and threatened to topple its government. To the astonishment of the Pentagon, CIA, and White House moguls who had sent him to Laos, Simons brought every one of his 107 men home alive.

Life was precious to him.

## THE MAN

Gruff, barrel-chested, a mean-looking rock of a soldier, Bull Simons evoked a rich mix of vivid emotions from those who knew him: disbelief of his courage, envy of his calm, awe of his exploits, and — above all — admiration of his gentleness.

An officer who served under him twice in Laos described him to me as "the only man I know who genuinely hates people." Yet he would admit that people are what Bull Simons cared most about. When Simons returned from Iran, Ross Perot related in his eulogy at Bull's memorial service in Dallas, "He watched the wives



and children of the rescued men joyfully and tearfully greet their husbands and fathers. After a few minutes, he looked sternly at me and said, 'I just got paid for the trip'."

Simons refused any further payment for pulling off the biggest jailbreak in history.

Concern for the men he led was a special mark of his leadership. "Soldiers," he felt strongly, "are entitled to leadership from men who can 'smart their way out of it'. I don't want my people to get their ass shot off for nothing. That's what leaders are for, to not let that happen. The guy who carries the gun wants to know what the hell kind of a man you are and he wants to know you're there with him — not up front, necessarily, but that you know your business, you've got control of the sonovabitch and if the thing goes sour that you are going to be there with him when it's time to have to out."

Little wonder that one of the 107 men he took to Laos in 1960 said of him later, "I would follow Bull Simons to hell and back for the sheer joy of being with him on the visit."

His 30-year feast of behind-the-lines forays took him into enough firefights to accept the blood of battle as "an occupational hazard." War, he pointed out, was a "miserable business to begin with," but he believed deeply in soldiering: "If history is any teacher," he reminded me once, "it teaches you that when you get indifferent and you lose the will to fight, some other sonovabitch who has the will to fight will take you over."

He knew after Korea that the "day of the good old cavalry charge is over," and he believed fervently in the efficiency of unorthodox, audacious operations. He didn't believe in foolhardy frolics: when he undertook an operation, its research and planning were meticulous. But he also felt strongly, as he told me once, "The more improbable something is, the surer you can pull it off."

The Army's decimation of its Special Forces ranks bothered him greatly after he retired: "They can produce results that far outweigh their numbers," he said. "You can demand anything of them, any goddamn thing you can name, and you can demand it with impunity, without any hesitation. But it takes good leaders, good training, people who know their business. And these guys will do it."

To save lives, he believed in surprise — and surprise, he would point out, "doesn't work if you don't use violence and speed. If you are going to err," he would add, "err on the side of violence."

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President Nixon awarded Simons Distinguished Service Cross for Son Tay raid. White House ceremony of 13 minutes was half as long as raid itself. Photo Credit: White House.

(When he was called to the White House in mid-1970 to brief Henry Kissinger on the forthcoming Son Tay raid, Simons assured the President's national security advisor, "We are going to use the minimum amount of fire necessary," but cautioned that the area was too confined to avoid enemy casualties. Kissinger asked him, "What the hell are you talking about?" and Simons replied, "We're going in there to rescue prisoners, not to blow people's heads off; but we've got to move fast and we'll use whatever fire is necessary to get the job done. But anybody who gets in our way is going to be dead.")

But he also knew the value of restraint. Briefing his White Star teams just before they went to Laos, Simons told them, "You are going to lose your manhood. Some dumb sonovabitch from the jungle is going to tick you off. But you're going to keep your mouth shut and take it."

"He was no apple-polisher, no politician," the *Richmond News Leader* said of him in a stirring Memorial Day editorial the week after he died. He was unimpressed by diplomatic niceties, bureaucratic rhetoric, and the fog of protocol. To Bull Simons, what counted was the *man*, not his position. (When President Nixon called him to the Oval Office a few days after the Son Tay raid for a few minutes of cordial chit chat before bemedaling him with the Distinguished Service Cross, Simons thought that was "very thoughtful of the President, but I wouldn't call it a thought-provoking visit. In fact, it was kind of dull and uncomfortable.")

In many respects, he was the antithesis of the Army he loved, and his "style" described the kind of Army its soldiers wanted it to be, but found it wasn't.

Here was a soldier who in three wars had proved he would and could do anything for his country; whose 56-man raid into the heart of North Vietnam left the communists thunderstruck by the audacity and precision of the raiders; whose blouse bore six rows of decorations and campaign ribbons, an array of parachutist and combat infantryman badges, three distinguished unit citations and the shoulder tab of the revered World War II 6th Ranger Battalion; whose raid into Son Tay was, as the *Richmond News Leader's* Memorial Day editorial summed up, "one of the noblest, most heart-breaking feats of American arms" — *yet neither the Secretary of Defense nor the President of the United States could get the Army hierarchy to make him a general*. As Ross Perot said of him, "Colonel Simons was a special man — he could lead, motivate and control a group of men better than any man I have ever known." But the Army would not make him a general.

When I was writing the book of his raid into Son Tay, former Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird called me one day and said, "Now listen, about your book. There's *one* thing you've got to get across:

that raid was a *disgrace*. It was a *disgrace*, do you hear me?" I almost dropped my pencil in disbelief, but flipped open a notebook and asked, "Why?"

"Because they didn't promote that colonel!" Laird told me that he had tried *personally* to get the Army's promotion board to pick Bull Simons for brigadier general. When Simons' name failed to show up on the list of 80 colonels selected for promotion to general a few months after the Son Tay raid, Laird personally appealed to top General William C. Westmoreland to exercise his prerogative as Army Chief of Staff and add Simons' name to the list. Westmoreland told Laird it was "impossible" — and went on to "explain": the Army had a rigid general officer selection system, it worked, the Chief of Staff shouldn't overrule his own promotion board, not everyone could become a general, Bull Simons was a fine colonel but he hadn't even been to one of the war colleges, just because he was an exceptional combat leader didn't mean that he would make a good general, etc., etc., etc. Laird tried three times, and failed; President Nixon personally intervened, and failed. The U.S. Army had become so ossified that not even its boss or its commander-in-chief could save it from shooting itself in the foot.

So Bull Simons retired from the Army on July 7, 1971 — to raise pigs for a living on a small farm in the swamps near Red Bay, Florida, 70 miles west of Eglin Air Force Base where he'd trained the Son Tay raiders. The pigs, he related with pride, are "the sweetest goddamn things you ever saw."

#### EPILOGUE

He was never bitter: the Army, he thought, had been good to him and Bull Simons was grateful that his country had let him serve it.

But the soldiers who came after him thought it ironic, and sad, that never once after his retirement was Arthur D. Simons invited to join the parade of retired Army "distinguished combat commanders" asked to lecture at its service schools, at West Point, the Special Warfare Center, the Command and General Staff College, or the Army War College.

Bull Simons' life was summed up in the irony surrounding his death. He died May 20 at Baylor Hospital in Dallas, Texas, failing to recover from a heart attack in March and subsequent operation to remove an aneurism. Ross Perot arranged for a memorial service honoring him in Dallas, with burial to be followed at the National Military Cemetery in Pensacola; near his home, his late wife Lucille, and his beloved pigs. The morning of that memorial service in Dallas, one of Bull's best friends called me — sputtering, irate, incredulous. The United States Air Force, he told me, had managed to find a regulation that would not allow it to fly Bull's body home, to take him to Pensacola in dignity, honored by the kind of pilots he

had tried to rescue.

Pentagon bureaucrats have always found a way to roll out the red carpet and special mission aircraft to fly administration straphangers, Congressmen, journalists, and the Jonestown massacre victims wherever needed; but they couldn't make one of those planes available for just a few hours for the last flight of a soldier who had unhesitatingly risked his life to free men he did not know from years of captivity. (Frank Borman of Eastern Airlines heard of the problem and provided a dedicated aircraft to take Bull Simons home in peace.)

The man who summed it up best was retired Air Force Colonel Warner A. Britton, the Air Force's "Mr. Rescue," the pilot who flew Bull Simons into Son Tay; he wrote me a few months after Bull's death:

"My wife and I attended the funeral at Pensacola and noted the apparent lack of interest on the part of the Defense Department. If not for Ross Perot, his family and employees, a few Army friends at Ft. Benning, about a dozen former POWs (no doubt rounded up by Perot), and Brigadier General Don Blackburn, Bull's family would have been very lonely.

"Of course, the eulogies by a half dozen POWs and one of the two Perot men recovered from Iran were as beautiful as anything that could have been provided by the Pentagon. The ceremony was simple — Bull would have liked that."

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**S**OF is proud and humble that Benjamin F. Schemmer took time out from the hot Washington weather and his work as editor of *Armed Forces Journal* to write the tribute to Bull Simons. He is uniquely qualified to do so.

Schemmer certainly fits the classic description of soldier/scholar. He graduated near the top of his class at West Point. He served active duty as an infantry officer, a Ranger, and parachutist. He has intimate knowledge of the Washington military and political scene. Schemmer spent five years at the Pentagon as an aerospace and military aircraft industry representative. He went on to become director in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. In 1968 he took over the *Journal*, the nation's oldest and only independent magazine of defense affairs.

In 1976 Schemmer's book *The Raid* (see SOF review, Spring '77) gave one of the few true accounts of Bull Simons' mission into a North Vietnamese POW camp. The book is a unique combination of information and insight.

Schemmer's account of Bull Simons comes from his contact with the man and his behind-the-scenes knowledge of military machinations. —S. Nielsen



**I**GNORED on pedestals at the diminutive Albany, Ore., airport, are two old military relics, a Bomarc Cruise missile and a weathered old F-86 Sabre fighter plane. Both had served their country as America's first line of defense, but are now discarded, aging relics. Their fate resembles that of America's Vietnam veterans — once America's first line of defense, but now cast out, a symbolism made more appropriate because Albany Airport is the location of a new company dedicated to recycling former military helicopter pilots into civilian helicopter jobs. The company also trains for unusual or hazardous situations, but more about that later.

In the mid-1970s, the various U.S. military services released tens of thousands of experienced helicopter pilots during the post-Vietnam cutbacks. The U.S. Army alone discharged over 30,000 chopper pilots. Thousands of pilots hit the market simultaneously during a period of recession — also a result of the Vietnam War — and flooded it.

The vast majority were unable to find work in their specialty and were forced to take work in fields they were untrained or unsuited for, or they joined the unemployment ranks. Needless to say, the V.A. and the military did little to help these pilots, most of whom expected to stay in the military for a career.

During the intervening years, the recession cleared up, but jobs were still few and far between, and the supply of experienced chopper pilots gradually dried up as most eventually accepted employment in non-flying fields. Now, years later, the supply of helicopter pilots cannot meet the market's demands. Jobs are available

servicing and supplying oil rigs in the North Sea & in the Arab states, flying the pipeline in Alaska, fighting forest fires in the U.S. and Canada, or delivering personnel and equipment to other remote areas.

It would seem to be a simple matter for an employer to send a person through chopper school and hire him upon completion, but it is not that easy. A basic helicopter license costs upwards of \$9,000 while the insurance companies of most businesses require minimum flying times of around 1000-1500 hours. The ex-Vietnam chopper pilots frequently have much more than the required number of

hours, with skills in hazardous flying that make them more aware than the average civilian pilot of the limits of their planes and their capabilities. Employers are beginning to search for those former chopper pilots now in other fields.

But there is a hitch: many pilots have been out of the cockpit for several years and their skills need brushing up. As all pilots know, the "feel" is never lost, but some



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# CHOPPER JOBS

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**SOF Staffer**

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**Visits Pilot Personnel International**

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by Dana Drenkowski

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practice rides are usually needed to bring it back. In addition, most military aviators need transition training to make them more suitable for civilian work. Review of civilian regulations and procedures, frequently waived automatically in the military, as well as new procedures instituted since a man left service, must be learned.

## Vietnam vet establishes own employment agency to help and retrain former chopper pilots.

A new company, Pilot Personnel International, Inc., has been formed to meet the needs of both the potential employer and former aviators. It functions as an employment agency, refresher flying training school, and military-civilian transition agency. Pilot Personnel International is the brainchild of Gene Peery, a Viet vet whose helicopter flying career completely encompasses the many years covered by PPI. Peery was in the 119th Assault Helicopter Company flying out of Pleiku in the late '60s during the Vietnam war games. He picked up over 1200 combat flying hours, being shot down five times.

After leaving the Army, Peery flew two years for a civilian company in Zambia and neighboring countries. He worked in Iran for an English company for several years, training Iranian helicopter pilots, then flew a stint in northern Canada. Upon his return to the U.S., Peery was by then aware of the problems aviators and employers faced in meeting one another's needs.

Peery spent the next two years setting up a personnel company that could serve both parties, giving 'Nam vets the neces-

sary transition training while lining people up with jobs. Meeting the requirements of both FAA and VA regulations was a long, tedious but necessary process and now Peery has a small, successful company going which offers services unique in its field.

When SOF heard about his program, Editor/Publisher Bob Brown dispatched SOF Aviation Editor Dana Drenkowski — himself a Viet pilot vet — to check out the program. Drenkowski has been involved in high-risk flying operations in the past and was particularly interested in certain aspects of training available at Albany.

Albany Airport is situated in a wide, tranquil valley 70 miles due south of Portland, Oregon, next to Interstate 5. The countryside around glows in various shades of emerald green, like an Irish landscape. Timber, hay, alfalfa, and berries make up the major crops in this sparsely populated region — an idyllic backdrop for flying. With hills, flatlands, ponds, lakes and streams everywhere, flying conditions can be duplicated for jobs around the world. The low population density minimizes protests over noise or safety. Grazing milk cows and Hereford munch grass peacefully as familiar helicopters fly by, the cattle oblivious to the instructor and student in each craft.

Enjoying the scenery, this author could almost forget the amount of training being done by this growing company.

PPI's approach begins with a canvass of prospective employers, finding out their projected manpower demands for the future and their requirements. For example, a company in Alaska may need a single man with over 1500 hours flying time, recent Bell 47 chopper time, sling-load-carrying experience, and the ability

to withstand the physical and mental rigors of flying in Alaska. Above all, they want a man who has successfully transitioned from military to civilian flying.

Peery keeps lists of former chopper pilots, as well as chopper pilots who are just now getting out of the service, and he goes through it trying to find the ideal person who is available for the job. Peery's lists are made up of men who have contacted him looking for work — whose names he keeps on file. Ideally, he says, he would like to have the names of every chopper pilot who got out of service in the late '60s and the '70s.

## PPI gives refresher and specialized training courses.

With a fairly firm commitment from the company for a job, Peery then contacts likely prospects. The pilot, if he accepts, begins the training program at Albany, using veteran's educational benefits to cover the costs of the whole program. Upon entry, PPI starts the prospect off with psychological profile testing to determine if the pilot will have problems with the area of the world he will have to work in, or with the work itself. The pilot gets 20 hours of refresher and specialized training with emphasis on the type of aircraft and specific skills needed for the job in mind. Bell 47s are available for general training and PPI rents or leases other types for familiarization and specialty training.

Peery himself participates in the flying training, along with a competent staff of instructor pilots. Professors from nearby Oregon State University provide area, topographical, weather, culture and history briefings. The latter two areas are particularly important as aviation companies

PPI president Gene Peery assists student Richard Houghton in preflight of Bell Jet Ranger. PPI provides pilots, training, or short-term contracts to companies not needing full-time pilots.



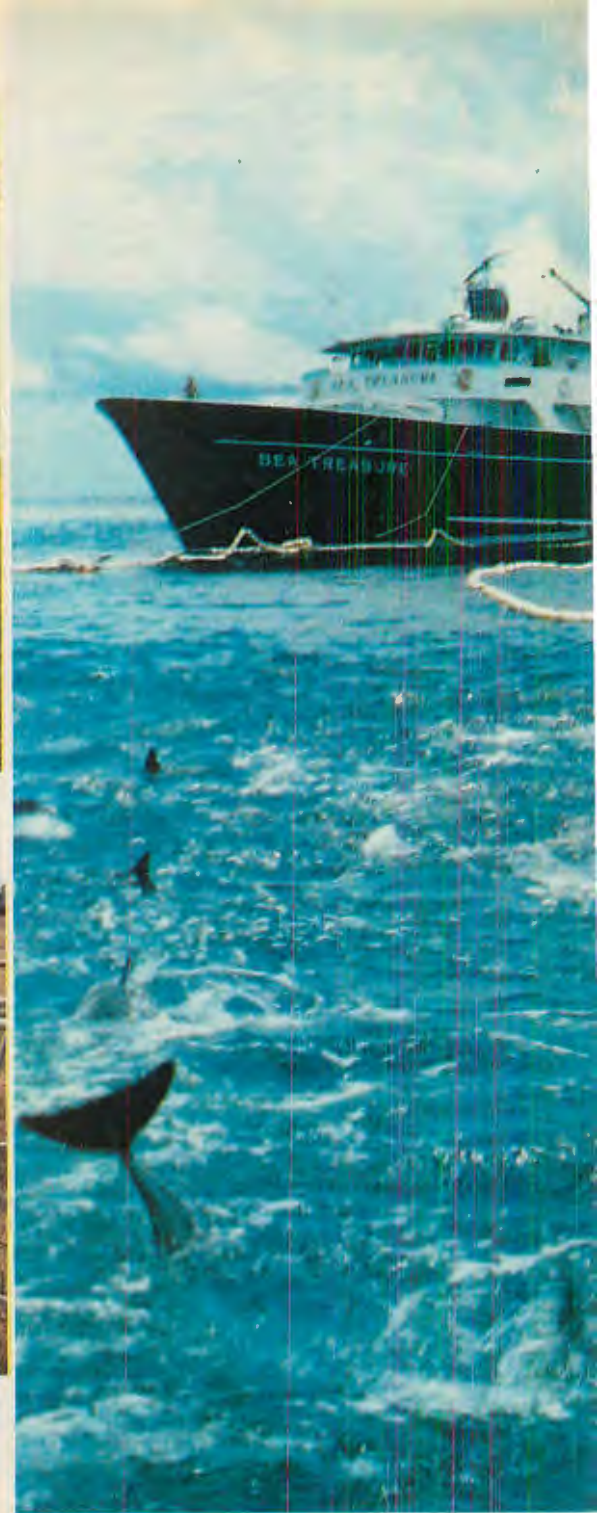


TOP: Bell 47 practices hover techniques.  
 ABOVE: Student (left) and maintenance man prepare Bell 47 for flight. School owns two, other chopper types are leased, depending on equipment used by projected employer.

and pilots have found — up to 60 percent of some fixed-wing and helicopter company's employees have resigned in the first year of work in overseas or remote areas due to what is commonly referred to as "culture shock".

SOF's Drenkowski, who has recently participated in the Rhodesian conflict, asked for a typical culture/history briefing on Rhodesia. History forms both his scholastic background and his hobby, so he expected to yawn his way through an uninformative briefing, adding pertinent comments at the end. Instead, he found himself listening with rapt attention as a professor from Oregon State University conducted a highly informative discussion of Rhodesian tribal and colonial history,

leading up to the present with explanations of how Rhodesia's past contributed to its present situation and problems. The professor went into detail about the differences between the M'Shona and the M'Tabele tribes, how they comprise one or the other of the two guerrilla/terrorist factions under Robert Mugabe and Joshua Nkomo, and how they cannot seem to work together in a guerrilla environment. The professor's assessment of the situation was that a victory by the guerrillas would very likely plunge the country into civil war far more disastrous than what is happening now. The professor confirmed this author's observation that the only working, multi-racial, multi-tribal organization existing today in Rhodesia-



Typical job: an assignment to fly fish from tuna boats in Pacific. Note helicopter on bridge. Precision flying,

Zimbabwe is the present government and Rhodesian army. As if to prove this, ZANU and ZAPU, the two terrorist groups comprising the Patriotic Front, have already clashed violently over tribal matters.

Other classes are given to improve former military pilots' abilities to communicate, both in the initial interview phase of employment as well as during their careers. Work on image and awareness of oneself is emphasized in efforts to eliminate future adjustment problems, of particular interest to a person going to work in remote areas.





TOP: PPI Bell 47 in training flight near Albany, Oregon. If student's job requires formation flying, it is practiced during training. ABOVE: Two PPI instructors prepare lesson plans for Viet vet transition training. RIGHT: Chopper interior: close but comfortable.

skill are required to fly around small boats with large masts, guy wires, and antennae.

And there is hands-on training of another sort. As Peery aptly puts it: "We have to get rid of what civilian employers see as a 'prima donna' attitude amongst most military pilots. In the military, when modification or minor work needs to be done on the equipment, you turned to one of dozens of maintenance personnel and left orders for it to be done before the next flight. On a civilian job, mechanics are few and far between. When your chopper needs fuel at a pipeline station in Alaska, the pilot is the guy who has to refuel his bird. If a sling for external-load work is required, you're going to be the dude put-

ting it on. You're going to have to do your own minor repair work. A lot of former military pilots find that hard to accept."

Survival classes are given, emphasizing once again the particular area the pilot is to work in. This author, a big-bore handgunner and combat competition shooter, attended an Alaska survival briefing. He was especially interested in hearing recommendations on weaponry for survival in Alaska, whose law requires aviators to carry adequate firearms in their personal survival kits.

### Alaska-work veterans recommend big-bore handguns.

Drenkowski carries a customized S&W .44 magnum Model 29 as his survival

weapon on flying contracts. Therefore, he was pleased to hear all Alaska-work veterans who briefed the Alaska-bound pilots urge them to get a .41 or .44 magnum sidearm to slow down or discourage the large bears which enormously dislike aircraft invading their personal areas. Each briefer pointed out that a pistol, if carried, must be a large-bore magnum capable of deeply penetrating a grizzly, brown, or polar bear, leaving a wide wound channel.

Several veterans commented that a few misguided souls carried .357 magnums, but they considered those weapons marginal. Most photos this author saw of helicopters in Alaska showed a .44 magnum Ruger carbine on the rack behind the

pilot's head. It was generally agreed, however, that the .44 magnum was more of a morale factor when facing a polar bear.

Alaska-work veterans recounted several stories of large bears, aroused to anger by the noise and intrusion of hovering helicopters in their territories, swatting or grabbing a skid while the chopper was in its most critical phase. Worse still were the stories of pilots watching a bear go after crews they had just put down in a remote area, making them feel like a grocery delivery service for bears. Hence the need for a hard-hitting, fast-handling carbine or pistol.

**“We have a reputation to build and maintain.”**

When PPI takes a pilot in for training with a commitment from a prospective employer, Peery is the first to state that the pilot is not guaranteed that particular job with that particular company. Requirements and conditions may change for the company — a chopper may be lost on the job; equipment is changed, creating new requirements for pilots; or Peery may not want to send a particular pilot on a certain assignment.

“We have a reputation to build and maintain. And we have to consider the best interests of both pilot and employer.

If for any reason we feel a pilot cannot work in a particular job or area, we will not recommend him for that job. If the company cannot take him on for any reason, PPI will find another job more suited to his skill level or needs.”

SOF watched this happen with one student. Negotiations had been under way before the pilot entered training to work in a particular field, but before he completed training, the company's insurer insisted on raising the company's hourly flying minimums. Before the student finished the course, PPI had arranged for a fairly comfortable job flying construction equipment in a major U.S. resort city. Peery is proud of the fact that of 32 pilots he trained this year, all 32 were placed in jobs, with salaries ranging from \$1500-\$4000 per month. One pilot picked up \$17,000 for three months' work flying fish from tuna boats in the Pacific Ocean to plants in the U.S.

“We were all tempted to close down the school for a few months and go fly that one ourselves,” Peery reminisced wistfully.

**“I want to be the ‘Red Adair’ of the helicopter business.”**

Speaking of the tuna boat operations, PPI offers training for any unique helicopter operation.

“I want to be the ‘Red Adair’ of the helicopter business,” Peery told SOF. “If a company has a special problem, we can think of a solution, design a training program for it, find the pilots, and train them to do the job, whether on a one-shot deal or on a long-term basis.”

Flying around ships, off-shore drilling rigs, in the treacherous mountains of Alaska, or on hazardous personnel/equipment deliveries or extractions, each brings special hazards requiring highly-trained, specialized pilots.

**“We also provide personnel on a part-time basis.”**

“In addition to men looking for full-time work, we have quite a few retired military chopper pilots in their early 40s and 50s who live off their pensions, but who want to keep their hands in flying, on a part-time basis. They have all the experience in the world and are available for short-term jobs. This is particularly valuable to companies or organizations which want or need a pilot for one or two operations, but not on a full-time contract. Or sometimes a company's pilot has reached his maximum allowable flying hours for the month or is sick and the company needs temporary flying help to pick up the slack. We do provide personnel for such situations.”



Rommel, with sand goggles across forehead, became a classic picture of The Desert Fox. The summit of his career was commanding the AFRIKA KORPS in the Libyan Desert.

## ERWIN ROMMEL

... wrote a book in 1937 titled *Infanterie Greift An* (Infantry Attacks). A new limited edition (hard back) of *Infantry Attacks* (English Translation) has just been printed and I invite you to take advantage of it.

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*Infanterie Greift An*, although there were a few stray copies in this country. Through the kindness of the Columbia University Library, Colonel Gustave E. Kidde, USMC, was able to make this translation for the Command & General Staff School. Most of the general tactical lessons taught by these combat narratives are valid today. The observations under which Rommel sums up his reactions to the various engagements are precisely the kind of counsel an American officer would give his troops and junior officers under similar circumstances.

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All of PPI's full program costs are picked up by the G.I. Bill. Once through the program, PPI is a pilot's permanent personnel agency, handling his employment whenever he looks for a new job. The only exceptions to that offer are when the pilot is fired by his previous company for cause, or he has been found guilty of violating FAA flying regulations. The price includes refresher training, new specialty training, area studies, Federal Aviation Regulations courses, and the areas already mentioned.

**"Our main problem is finding enough pilots for available jobs."**

PPI's main problem, according to Peery, is finding enough pilots to fill the jobs available. It was a pleasant to hear that jobs for pilots are once again available. This writer found the courses to be professional, informative, and directed specifically to ex-military pilots. The professors from Oregon State University and the communications teacher all know their business. The flying training is very good, as is to be expected of instructors such as Gene Peery with strong backgrounds in aviation and training. For a small company, Peery has concentrated a lot of good talent under one roof. The program was flexible enough to apply itself to the singular problems of each individual and his projected job.

Veterans who want to get back into flying can write Pilot Personnel International, Inc., P.O. Box 653, Albany, Oregon, USA. Phone (503) 926-4999 for details.



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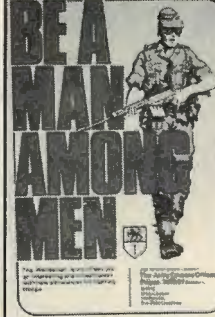
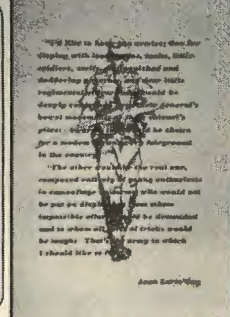

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# ONE MAN'S SOLUTION

## Custom Pistol & Holster for Vehicular Carry

by Dana Drenkowski

**A**s a pilot, SOF Aviation Editor Dana Drenkowski faces a problem many pilots and vehicle drivers have regarding secondary armament. A veteran of combat in eight nations and frequently involved in flying in remote areas where survival is a very real challenge (if forced down), he recognized the problem as a matter of life and death rather than theory and designed his own equipment. Editor/Publisher Robert K. Brown happened to see his gear one day and asked him to tell SOF readers about it. His reply follows.—The Editors.

**C**OMBAT experience left me unsatisfied with standard holsters and the usual issue sidearm — in the U.S. Air Force the S&W .38 Combat Masterpiece with 4-inch barrel. After some thought and experimentation, I designed the sidearm and rig pictured in this article.

### Caliber — the first consideration.

I wanted a weapon capable of near rifle ranges, yet portable enough to be carried on the body, where heavy sling-supported weapons would be uncomfortable or, in an ejection-seat-equipped airplane, downright hazardous to the pilot. Furthermore, being a believer in the Cooper school of thought concerning big-bore handguns, I wanted a .44 or .45 caliber weapon. It would be both a survival and combat weapon, and had to be capable of handling light loads and shot loads for small game, medium loads for defense, and heavy loads for large game or long-range shots (in excess of 100 yards). I chose the .44 magnum round as being most capable of doing all I wanted in a survival/defense firearm.

Some will question my choice of the big revolver over a .45 auto, which readers and friends have seen me use in combat competition and overseas on operations. I continue to use a .45 auto in situations in which I could expect to defend myself

against multiple assailants, due both to its evidenced stopping power and its rapid reloading capabilities. When working on the ground in areas where action is likely, I carry a rapid-firing, two-handed weapon as my primary piece — be it shotgun, assault rifle, or submachine gun.

Expecting to engage multiple targets in an offensive capacity while on patrols or

ambush, the .45 is an ideal back-up weapon for when my primary weapon is disabled, empty or otherwise unavailable. I can continue to engage multiple targets with my .45, even in an offensive capacity, with only some loss of effectiveness over my primary piece. This is not academic. Though I received only limited training from one of Jeff Cooper's seminars in the recent past, I credit his training and my continued participation in combat pistol matches with the ease and confidence with which I transitioned from a primary weapon which had run dry to my .45 while in the midst of a shooting fray.



**LEFT: The Problem.** Author wears standard equipment for F-4 missions over North Vietnam. Walther PPK in shoulder holster buried by survival vest, harness. Browning P-35 under left hand in cross-draw holster. Both in way of straps, uncomfortable. **BELOW: The Solution.** Author's customized .44 magnum S&W in almost horizontal rig over abdomen. Weapon away from most equipment, yet accessible, comfortable.



## As a pilot, my primary weapon is an airplane.

However, when I am working as a pilot, my primary weapon is an airplane, and my main job is flying, not conducting my private rehearsal for World War III. If I have to leave my plane for any reason in a remote, hostile environment — whether “hostile” due to angry human inhabitants or to climate and topography — I enter a survival situation and am interested in returning my warm young bod to more friendly regions. A weapon capable of bringing down a rabbit or tasty feathered critter with a shot load may be just what I need in one situation, while a weapon capable of discouraging hungry Kodiak bear, slobbering tigers or sharp-toothed leopards may be required in the next case.

In the latter cases, a big-bore magnum with full-house loads is the only belt weapon I could carry that might slow down one of the larger animals, giving me



Radically raked thumb-break holster was hand made from top quality leather. Note keeper to right of holster.

a chance to impress it with my 400-meter-dash capabilities. In addition, previous work with .44 magnums has left me confident in my ability to puncture a reasonably sized target up to 250 meters away. Hence, my choice of the versatile .44 magnum cartridge. With the cartridge chosen, the choice of weapon was fairly obvious: a S&W Model 29. A double-action was necessary for when quick second or third shots might be required, and to date only one good double action .44 is available: the Smith and Wesson.

I had problems with the barrel length. The 8-3/8-inch barrel was too long, as was the 6½-inch model. But I had problems with the 4-inch barrel's hefty barrel whip and with loss of some .44-magnum effectiveness, since some of the powder continued to burn after the bullet left the shorter tube.

I decided to cut off a Douglas .44 bull barrel blank to 5-3/8-inch length, then turn it down to under an inch in diameter to reduce its size and weight, until I had what I consider an ideal compromise between weight, balance, and fatigue factors inherent in carrying a heavy gun. The extra 1-3/8 inches provide additional room

for powder to burn and the weight helps absorb recoil and retards muzzle whip. For added shooter comfort, I had it Magna-Ported by those good folks in Michigan. The barrel work was done by one of the four best pistolsmiths in the intermountain west, Sergeant Don Jandro, of the Jefferson County (Colo.) Sheriff's Department. His address: 1005 S. Benton St., Lakewood, CO 80226. Jandro also tuned up the action, leaving me with what observers and I consider the smoothest



Author's 5-inch, Douglas bull barrelled S&W Model 29 with Pachmayr grips.

S&W action any of us has ever felt, bar none! Pachmayr rubber grips gave the weapon a better feel.

The final step on the gun will be its finish, but I have yet to choose that, leaving it for now with a temporary blue job until when I can take it out of harness for a few weeks.

I next turned to the problem of a holster. Working with FBI slant rigs, cross-draw and shoulder holsters, et al, I was satisfied with none. Rigs worn on the hip or under the armpit interfere with the various straps and harnesses used to tie myself into ejection seats. Weight, especially of a big-bore handgun, is fatiguing when carried on one side or another, and frequently leaves the wearer walking or standing with a perceptible list. I wanted something that would be comfortable and immobile when worn for hours sitting down. It should also be comfortable when walking for hours at a time, yet out of the way of swinging hands or equipment carried on the back or side.

Quick access was also a major consideration.

Studying the problem, I noted while traveling for long periods in airplanes that

I frequently removed my weapon from whatever holster I had it in and jammed it in my waistband for comfort. When seated, it was almost horizontal, making for a comfortable carry while being very quick on the draw. It had the advantage of being accessible in a vehicle, of particular interest when terrorist attack or hijackings are possibilities.

I decided to adopt this center-of-abdomen position for a holster and took my ideas to Denver-area holster-maker Jerry Ashton for added ideas and manufacture. Ashton is a custom leatherworker who specializes in custom rigs for knife and handgun. I had taken other ideas to him in the past and I currently carry my .45 auto in a field rig he designed and made for me.

Ashton listened patiently to my description, complete with almost incomprehensible hand gestures, demonstration of inside-the-waistband carrying position, desired angle, and came up with a friction-tight rig surpassing my requirements. Though the gun will stay in the holster for all IPSC rollover tests without a safety strap, he added a thumb-break snap for added security in the hopefully unlikely event my airplane and I must part company before I manage to land it somewhere (though I am a sometime sky-diver, my feelings about leaving a perfectly good airplane to test a nylon parachute are best described as mixed).

The .44 is easy to carry in this position, distributing weight in the middle of the body instead of to one side or the other, can be worn with a backpack, is handy for plane or vehicle carry, yet comes out as fast as I can draw, when needed.

The holster belt goes over my standard 1¾-inch pants belt, usually fitting in the belt loops of my trousers. I also have three snap-restraining attachments to keep it over my pants belt if it will not fit the loops of certain pants. Slide-on ammunition loops can be added, although I prefer carrying up to a full box of ammo in an old bandolier thrown over my shoulder. Three speed loaders give me some quick reload capability and my personal weapon and belt are complete.

For the reader interested in doing similar work, I have estimated the costs over the price of a .44 (See below). Add to this the cost of your favorite finish and you have a good pilot's weapon.

### .44 MAGNUM CUSTOMIZING COSTS

Bull barrel and action job (with barrel turned down to less than one inch):	less than \$200
Magna-Port .....	\$ 50
Holster .....	\$ 60
Pachmayr grips .....	\$ 22
	<b>\$332</b>





1948



**PARRIS  
ISLAND  
REVISITED**

# SEMPER FIDELIS

by Bob Poos

**T**HE ancient coal-fueled locomotive chuffed slowly through the southern swampland, pulling a short string of clanking, rattling cars. The Kid from Cleveland had a crap game going in the end of one car. The Candyman looked morose. He was homesick already. Dago and the Coal Miner stared, fascinated, out the open windows. Neither had ever been outside the state of Illinois and the moss-draped cypress trees were a thing of wonder. Someone passed a pint of gin. Someone else, unused either to gin or the moist heat, threw up out a train window. Some of the young men laughed and boasted of their toughness. Others sat silently, frightened, away from home for the first time.

And suddenly it was all interrupted. The crap game, the thoughts, the chatter, by a bellow of surprising force from the old railway conductor who appeared to be as old as the train and who, up to then, had remained grimly silent.

"Y'all listen up," he roared. "Y'all better listen up if y'all know what's good

for you. Ah been takin' people to this place since 1917. Y'all ain't going to like it here but you'll like it less if you don't pay attention. Straighten this car up. Throw them cigarette butts out the window. Hand me all them whiskey bottles. And keep your mouth shut.

"This is Parris Island and y'all are gonna meet your DIs soon. Too soon."

That was the introduction of Platoon 219 to Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, S.C., on Sept. 13, 1948.

No one from Platoon 219 remembered with clarity the next few hours. It was all a blur of screaming men dressed in knife-creased khaki uniforms and pith helmets. A miasma of heat, insects, sand, sunlight, running, the shock of a suddenly-shaven head. And more bellowing from sergeants and corporals. Much more. Sleep was a blissful release and it ended too soon. Because the next morning at 0455 it got worse. And worse. And worse.

They don't bring Marine recruits to Parris Island on that rattly old train anymore — it was abandoned in the mid-1960s — they bring them to Charleston, S.C., by plane and then bus them to the island. And there have been a lot of other changes at PI since Platoon 219 was rudely and rapidly introduced to U.S. Marine Corps discipline in the Fall of 1948.

Some of the changes are unquestionably for the better. Some are not and

some are controversial among officers, DIs — and the Parris Island recruits themselves.

Physical conditioning received by Marine recruits these days is not controversial. It's at least twice as tough as it was during the brief period of peace between World War II and Korea. Some of the recruits who graduated in 219 could not have met the physical training requirements at PI today.

However, the humiliation, the utter destruction of personality which used to be dealt out at Parris Davis no longer exists in the fashion it did back in the 1940s.

**T**HE Coal Miner committed the absolutely unpardonable sin. He locked his locker box with the key inside. Sudden death would be preferable to reporting this fact to Sergeant Davis. But report it, he must. He advanced to the DI's quarters.

"Sir. The private requests permission to speak to the Drill Instructor."

"I can't hear you, boy."

"SIR, THE PRIVATE..."

At explanation's end, Sgt. Davis appeared to be stricken with both grief and outrage.

"Ah din't think Ah haid eny shitbird in this platoon stupid enuf to lock his fucking key inside his locker box. So we'll just let the rest of this platoon see what a shitbird they got among them."

The sergeant produced an enormous brass ring containing duplicates of the 70 odd keys possessed by Platoon 219's recruits.

Sgt. Davis put his face an inch from the Coal Miner's and bawled:

"Rat shoulder locker box, you Shitbird from Yemmassee. Look through the keys on this ring until you find your number and until you do find it you holler out, 'Ah'm a shitbird from Yemmassee. I went and lost mah locker key.' And I wanta be able to HEAH you, boy."

The Coal Miner proceeded to do just that and mid-way through the ring on the second time around, he found his key. By the time he did, he was hoarse, sweating and absolutely destroyed as a human being. His comrades grinned, snickered and made some uncomplimentary comments, the first time they had been permitted to grin, snicker or speak without permission in the three weeks they had been Marine recruits at PI.

Such things are what they do not do to recruits at PI anymore.

Col. Frank Hart, commander of the Recruit Training Regiment at Parris Island; the son of a former Marine Corps general and himself a decorated veteran of Vietnam where he served as an "adviser" to the Vietnamese Marines during the war, explains why:

"The young men we're getting at Parris Island today are simply a different breed of cat than we got 30, 20, 15, even 10 years ago. In some ways that makes our job

here more difficult and in some ways it makes it easier.

"The young men of Plt. 219 in 1948 came here with much more parental discipline than they generally do today. They had a much more well-developed sense of patriotism, duty and honor, if you will, than the bulk of recruits today. They got that at home and in school. But these young men now are coming from a different society. There is far less discipline at home and in school now than then. And very few of our recruits have the faintest idea what the word patriotism means.

"However, these men now are better educated than they used to be and they have more questioning minds. You must explain to them why discipline and training are required. Once they understand that, they respond and respond well.

"It just doesn't work anymore to tear them down to ground zero and then rebuild them. What we do now is issue them a challenge to live up to. And they enjoy meeting that challenge. We tell them, 'We'll tell you how to get through this place, how to endure it. We'll teach you how to do it. But we cannot do it for you. You have to do that.' And most of them do."

Col. Hart's face hardens. "And as for those that don't, well, we have no room for them in the Marine Corps. Parris Island is a very easy place to get out of. About 15 percent get out."

Col. Hart's DIs agree with him — up to a point.

Said one: "We'd like to be able to subject them to more stress than we are permitted to. We're sending some kids out of the regiments that are simply unsatisfactory. But if they meet all the requirements, there's not much you can do about it. They graduate. We do all we can, but I don't think it's enough."

DIs in 1948 were perfectionists. They still are.

But today's Marine recruit is physically fit when he goes to his first assignment. Recruits these days routinely run four to five miles each morning. Their first encounter with bodily development, aside from running, is "The Circuit," called by some "The Dirty Dozen," a circular course of punishing exercises that includes weight lifting, leg lifts, chin-ups, and sit-ups. Each of the 12 points is reached by a wind sprint.

Marine recruits still run the old World War II obstacle course negotiated by Plt. 219's recruits but it's about the easiest physical challenge they have to meet. And they still take the bayonet course — an almost senseless pursuit in view of the fact that the Marine, like the soldier, is now armed with an M16 rather than real rifles like the M1 and M14. (Marine instructors call the M16 the "Mattel Toy." Most of them, particularly range coaches, consider it virtually worthless).

The most awesome challenge issued to recruits these days is the "Confidence



## 1978

Course." It is no place for someone with acrophobia (fear of heights), because much of it involves climbing up 40- to 45-foot-tall towers on cargo nets and then descending in one fashion or another.

Particularly intriguing to this writer was the "Slide for Life," which consists of a 30-foot climb, negotiating a log about the size of a telephone pole, leaning out and grabbing hold of a rope anchored to the ground below at an angle. Below the rope is a pond, convenient for falling into when one loses his grip.

Recently this writer observed a platoon encountering the "Confidence Course" for the first time. About one man in four found the "Slide for Life" too much to manage the first time out. It is not a simple matter of descending hand-over-hand. Recruits must do a leg lift, get their ankles hooked around the rope, slide down one third of the way, drop their legs, reverse their grip, do another leg lift, slide down another third and repeat the process.

One recruit was typical. He was a large black youth, powerfully built, with thick muscular legs, probably a football player. The legs proved too much for him on his first effort at reversing. He could not get them back up around the rope. So he just hung there. He probably could have hung there all year. But a DI, smothering a grin, bawled, "Awright, private, you're holding up the whole platoon. You yell 'Marine Corps' and salute." The private did and, of course, plummeted to the water below. Swimming and wading to the end, the dripping youngster crawled out, stood at attention and yelled: "Sir, the private requests permission to speak to the Drill Instructor."

"Speak up, private."

"Sir, could the private be permitted to try that again?"

"Don't you worry your head about that, private. You'll get plenty more chances. Now move out to the next point."

The private muttered, "Well, I damn near made it," and then sprinted off.

Marine recruits also rappel down a 46-foot tower now, something undreamed of in 1948. And, of course, there is the pugil stick. The Marines invented that and they still use it much more in recruit training than the Army, according to a former Special Forces soldier, at any rate.

Sgt. Larry Washington, 26, was putting some of his recruits through their final clash on the pugil-stick course recently and commented: "This is one of the best things we do here. You can't bash 'em

### THE MARINE PHILOSOPHY

Famous World War II newspaper correspondent Ernie Pyle is much more identified with the Army than the Marines, but after observing them in some Pacific fighting he described the Marine philosophy thus:

"Marines have a cynical approach to war, they believe in three things: liberty, payday and that when two Marines are together in a fight, one is being wasted. Being a minority group militarily, they are proud and sensitive in their dealings with other military organizations. A Marine's concept of a perfect battle is to have other Marines on the right and left flanks, Marine aircraft overhead and Marine artillery and naval gunfire backing them up."

—B.P.



TOP: Seven generations of Marines who have fought in five conflicts have marched under the shadow of Iron Mike commemorating the Parris Island dead in WW I. TOP RIGHT: Honor graduates of Marine platoon receive Pfc warrants on graduation day wearing dress blues awarded top four men in platoon. RIGHT: Recruit grins as he scores a bullseye at PI rifle range. BOTTOM RIGHT: Recruiting poster tells it just like it is. BELOW: Recruit tries desperately not to plummet into water while negotiating Slide for Life obstacle on Confidence Course.



PHOTOS BY BOB POOS

**BOOT CAMP MAY BE  
ONE HELL OF A LIFE**

**BUT IT TURNS OUT  
ONE HELL OF A MARINE**

We're looking for a few good men.





TOP: DI Pete Logue, a legend at PI for his excellence in turning out top platoons, lectures young recruits shortly before graduation day. LEFT: Recruit grimaces as he struggles with heavy bar bells on "Dirty Dozen" course. BELOW: Recruits battle it out with pugil sticks.



around like you used to be able to but you can sure as hell let 'em bash each other around. And they love it. It serves as a release valve to let them blow off all their frustrations. Look at 'em."

And, indeed, one brawny recruit from a platoon was taking on two others (they do both one-on-one and two-on-one). He vanquished both, much to the cheering delight of the buddies in his platoon, pitched the pugil stick aside, and raised his clenched hands in a victory gesture.

**S**GT. Davis ignored the swirling clouds of cigarette smoke and the hubbub of beer-drinking noncoms around him in the DI's slopchute and said to Cpl. Miles: "That clown running 221 thinks they're better than 219. I bet him a keg of beer last night that 219 will be the Honor Platoon of this battalion. Best bunch of kids we had in a long tahm. We're gonna make 'em the Honor Platoon."

*Discipline, which had been fierce for four weeks in 219, became murderous. But the recruits could somehow sense that something was happening and they responded. The Platoon somehow began to march a shade more smartly, count cadence more loudly, more in rhythm, and behave altogether a shade more squared-away than the other training platoons.*

They do not have honor platoons at PI anymore. Recruits are formed into a training series of four platoons, composing what is essentially a company but nevertheless called a series.

The training cycle is 10.3 weeks with about one week of "forming" days while

### PI HEADGEAR

Perhaps the most obvious change at Parris Island from 1948 to 1979 is the headgear.

In that older Corps — there's no such thing as "The Old Corps" — recruits wore pith helmets and nowadays they sport "chrome domes," helmet liners painted silver. The goal is the same: keep the fierce Parris Island sun from cooking the privates' brains.

In this case, new is better. Pith helmets tended to turn a slight breeze into what sounded like a howling gale, making it difficult to hear commands. And DIs are not fond of having commands ignored. And the pith helmets could literally be a pain because DIs found them handy for punishment. A DI would snatch the helmet from an erring recruit's head, reverse it and rap the miscreant on the top of his bald pate. And pith helmets were virtually impossible to fit into a seabag without being crushed flat.

Chrome domes do not interfere with the hearing. DIs do not dare bash recruits over the head with them and they remain behind at Parris Island for further use.—B.P.

a platoon series is assembled. The cycle is broken down into three phases. The first phase is three weeks of the most basic military training. The recruit learns that one must ask permission to speak to a "Real Marine," particularly a DI. The recruit learns that the swiftest, most efficient way to get to chow is by marching — and he learns how to march, wear a uniform properly, learn military courtesy, patriotism, American history — and learns that one must stand at attention without moving despite the fact that a sand flea is sinking its fangs in one's inner ear.

"Yes, sir. The private has had his dinner."

"Well, private, that sand flea ain't had his dinner yet and you're disturbing him at it. Leave him alone, ya understand?"

"Yes, sir. The private understands perfectly, sir."

Sand flea feeds on, undisturbed.

Nearly the same words were roared at the Kid from Cleveland in 1948 and at Pvt. William Bartlett of Foster, Mass., who graduated from Parris Island this summer.

The initial phase is followed by two weeks at the rifle range, which recruits find today, just as they did in 1948, the very best part of Parris Island. Then recruits stand a week of Mess and Maintenance duty, which needs not be explained to anyone who has ever been an enlisted man in the Army or Marine Corps. It's fiercely hard work, but work performed under the supervision of someone other than the DI who, hard as he works at his job, scorns menial labor. It is a blessed week of relative relaxation from strict discipline for recruits.

"Then," says S. Sgt. Pete Logue, a two-year DI who recently extended for another year of this difficult duty and is almost a legend among his fellow DIs, "we put the polish on them and give them the real training."

The "real training" consists of a week living out in the boondocks at Elliot's Beach, a place well remembered by every Marine who ever went through PI. During this week, recruits learn how to throw live hand grenades, practice squad tactics and crawl the infiltration course, where they get their first taste of simulated combat with loud noises (quarter-pound blocks of TNT) hurting their eardrums and showering them with clods of dirt and splashes of mud. And the infiltration course is much the same as it was in 1948, except that Marine recruits these days are not permitted the experience of hearing live rounds fired over their heads from fixed machine guns spraying bullets three feet overhead.

That's too bad because there is no better way to learn how to judge the distance of a bullet than by hearing one pass nearby.

Marine spokesmen at PI give two reasons for this. Some say that Marine

headquarters worries overmuch that a recruit might accidentally be pierced by one of those bullets. Others insist that it is simply a matter of economics, that the Marine Corps lacks the funds to purchase enough ammunition to fire over the heads of the thousands of recruits that pass through Parris Island each year.

### "You can sure as hell let 'em bash each other around."

"We're just broke," said a Gunnery Sergeant. "Congress and the Department apparently like to keep us that way and up to now, the Marine Brass has been more interested in buying things like Phantom jets than they have in buying bullets. I hope Barrow means what he says about a 'return to the basics.'"

(Gen. Robert Barrow was the Marines' Comandant-designate when those words were spoken and after being so named, had said in a speech that, indeed, the Marine Corps would, under his command, "return to the basics." Since Bob Barrow was a company commander under Chestey Puller in the First Marine Rifle Regiment in Korea that probably means the Marines will, for the next four years at least, concentrate on being infantrymen.)

Chesty Puller was the most decorated Marine in the Corps' history, with five Navy Crosses and several Purple Hearts among his 56 decorations. Puller spent his entire career, which ranged from Haiti to the Chosin Reservoir, in the infantry.)

On the subject of realistic training, Herb Quiller, Sergeant Major of the Recruit Training Regiment, said: "I don't know what the hell they expect of us. Every time we have a damned war, they want us to field a bunch of tough, trained Marines, like they've always read about, but they don't want us to train 'em rough. Damn Congress and the bleeding hearts. Damn!"

Training. Marines. The Rifle. Whenever one thinks of those things, which are synonymous, it always comes to the rifle. The Marines have been in love with the rifle since the first Marine discarded a smoothbore in the Revolution in favor of a longarm with lands and grooves in its barrel.

Trouble is, the Marines don't have a real rifle anymore. They've got the "Mattel Toy," the flimsy, plastic stock .223 caliber M16 whose bullet is sensitive to wind drift at ranges beyond 300 yards.

Recruit range time is just two weeks now (it was three in 1948 and for many years after). But range coaches pretty much agree that two weeks is time enough for what they have to work with these days.

Range Sgt. Maj. Hank Gulledge (he retired shortly after SOF's visit) explains: "The philosophy of the M16 is all wrong. It's a philosophy of area fire and that goes against every concept that the Marine Corps has ever stood for. We've always

emphasized aimed fire and I think we still should.

"Now I know that every old timer always criticizes a new rifle. Hell, I broke in on an '03 in 1942. It was accurate, but it kicked like a mule. Little guy like me, I had to crawl back to the line after firing three shots. Then we got the M1 Garand. I liked it immediately, 'cause I could shoot expert with it and not be beaten half to death. But the old timers squawked that we shouldn't have a semiautomatic, that we'd waste too much ammunition. Well, we didn't do too bad with it at places like Tarawa, Pelilu, and Iwo, not to mention Korea.

"Then along came the M14 and some people didn't think we ought to have full-auto capability.

"But for my money, the M14 rifle is the best combat rifle made. I hated to see it go and I'd like to see it come back. That 'Mattel Toy' is OK for spraying treelines and bushes close up, but the Marines need a real rifle and I don't care if it does have full automatic capability. Probably ought to. But we need a real rifle."

The Marines fire what seems to old timers an abbreviated course. It consists of five rounds, sitting, five kneeling, and five offhand at 200 yards, slowfire, and then 10 rounds rapid, sitting, in 60 seconds with a magazine change. From 300 yards, the recruits fire five rounds sitting slow fire and 10 rapid from the prone position. Years ago, the 300-yard fire was almost double that. The 500-yard fire remains the conventional 10 rounds prone with a 10-minute time limit.

If a recruit fails to qualify on record day, he will be permitted another chance later during training — an innovation that results in qualification for more than 95 percent of the recruits. The only other weapon dealt with in recruit training is familiarization firing of the .45 service pistol. Another innovation is a walk-through course with pop-up targets.

**T**HE Kid from Cleveland proved an absolute inspiration to his buddies in 219 — by trying to desert. After four weeks, he decided that a Marine's life was not for him. So, one night as the rest of the platoon snored, the Kid slipped out of his bunk and set out on foot for freedom. Trouble was, that Parris Island is just that — a tide-water island. The Kid was soon mired up to his waist in black muck. Hours later, MPs dragged him out, plastered with mud, raw with insect bites and frightened by the night sounds of reptiles, birds and animals he had never heard in Cleveland.

Military justice was swift under the old Articles for the Regulation and Government of Naval Service on Rocks and Shoals as they were called. The Kid was in the PI brig within a matter of minutes. He returned to 219 three days later, a changed man. The Kid never told the others in 219 what had happened to him in the brig, but

he said forcefully: "Boys, don't never let yourself get into that place. You'll hate yourself, believe me. You'll just flat hate yourself. There is worse places than good old 219."

This caused the others to redouble their efforts and served as a major contribution to Sgt. Davis' efforts at developing an Honor Platoon, which 219 did later become.

They don't send recruits to the brig at PI anymore. The new Uniform Code of Military Justice places limitations upon punishment available to small unit commanders that did not exist under Rocks and Shoals. But recruits still try to "escape" from Parris Island. Now, they're sent to a psychiatrist or psychologist who recommends to the DI whether they should be retrained or sent home. The DI does not have to accept these recommendations and has wide latitude in his decision. Sometimes a DI sees something in a youngster that not even the individual sees in himself. One recent recruit tried five times to flee Parris Island but the DI, exerting near superhuman forbearance, kept him on. The recruit graduated from boot camp, a proud and happy young man.



It's all over now. DI congratulates newly graduated Marine upon being an honor man

and winning a set of a Marine Dress Blues as well as meritorious promotion to PFC.

These DIs that seem to their recruits to be an even mix of God and Satan, obviously are dedicated noncoms who love their work despite its 18-hour days, and arduous physical requirements. They must perform every activity demanded of the recruits, only better, something Sgt. Davis and Cpl. Miles did not have to do.

They don't get that way by accident. First, the Marines make a Corps-wide effort at recruiting the best of its NCOs. They need not have an infantry Military Occupational Specialty, despite the fact that most of their work involves basic infantry training. Any MOS will serve. But they must be between 21 and 35 years of age, with an intelligence quotient of 90 or above (few are taken at the minimum score) and they must have an outstanding record in their unit.

The Corps accepts personal volunteers and also punches buttons in its personnel

computer at Headquarters Marine Corps just outside Washington, DC. The whirring computer spits out names of such NCOs and efforts are made at recruiting them. Those who decline suffer no consequences, although few decline.

Then they are brought to Parris Island. All DIs are trained at the PI Drill Instructors' School or at the other Marine Recruit Center at San Diego, California.

**"For my money, the M14 is the best combat rifle."**

Capt. Mike Wills, a much-decorated Vietnam veteran, explains what kind of men come to his school and what they are taught there.

"They must be emotionally and financially stable, with an outstanding Corps record. They can have no personal hardships or problems that might keep their minds off their work and they must pass a rugged physical fitness test.

"Before they get here, they are closely interviewed by their unit commanders and they get a stress interview here. They are screened by a psychiatrist. This would be

a natural job for a born sadist and although DIs are frequently accused of being just that, we can prove they are not.

"The school lasts eight weeks and the future DIs are taught courses ranging from how to handle a ceremonial sword, something few of them have ever done before (veteran DIs call it the BFK, Big Fucking Knife), to the psychology of management. They are purposely subjected to more stress than they will ever be permitted to inflict upon a recruit, and they are run and exercised until they drop.

"About 15 percent of them don't make it and return to their units without prejudice, which means they don't get any bad fitness comments in their service records."

DI school did not exist when Sgt. Davis and Cpl. Miles were DIs. They learned by on-the-job training. The school was

established in 1956, shortly after the "Ribbon Creek" incident, one of the more tragic episodes in Parris Island history. A DI named S. Sgt. Matt McKeon took a platoon of recruits on a night march in the boondocks, marching them through a tidal stream named Ribbon Creek. The platoon had been a sloppy one, which McKeon was trying to correct, and during the crossing, the men became separated from one another, confusion turned into chaos and six young men drowned.

Sgt. McKeon was charged with violation of the general order prohibiting possession of alcoholic beverages; oppression of recruits by leading them into Ribbon Creek; drinking alcoholic beverages in the presence of recruits — and manslaughter.

He was acquitted of manslaughter but convicted of the other charges, sentenced to nine months at hard labor, a bad conduct discharge and a \$270 fine. Later, a Navy Review Board reduced the sentence to three months, abolished the fine and bad conduct discharge and reduced him to the rank of private. McKeon served his time, returned to duty, first as a chaplain's assistant and later to other duties at Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, N.C. — where he later was named Base Marine of the Year — ultimately took his discharge and became a successful businessman, never again to be in the news.

The DI School at Parris Island is located in the same building where McKean was courtmartialled — somehow both ironic and appropriate.

It is awesome for a former Parris Island recruit to walk into the carpeted, softly lit office where tall, silvery-haired Maj. Gen. Joseph McLernan, Post Commander of Parris Island, sits behind a massive wooden desk.

The general smiles when informed that the visiting writer was a recruit here in 1948.

"It was quite a bit different then, wasn't it? I think I can explain how and why it was different. Back then — and for many years thereafter, for that matter — the practice at Parris Island was supervision by leadership and direction only. Sometimes, I'm afraid, rather brutal leadership and direction.

"We have changed that to participatory leadership, the DI's actually doing everything that is expected of a recruit, thereby showing them that what is expected is not by any means impossible.

"And, of course, we have eliminated brutality, or at least reduced it to the bare minimum. Whenever we hear of it, swift and stern measures are taken to correct it.

"You must understand that youth, society, the country, have changed through the years. Practices that were formerly most successful simply will not work these days. Many people regret that fact, but it is a fact that we must live with

here at Parris Island."

Told that a common complaint heard from DIs and other noncoms associated with them was that the DI is an over-supervised man with too many senior noncoms and officers breathing down his neck and being too visible to the recruits, Gen. McLernan said:

"I believe I have an answer for that. Years ago they were under-supervised, with some tragic circumstances resulting. One thing is for certain, the supervision is here to stay. As for the visibility of senior noncoms and officers, I am all for that. In the old days, a recruit never laid eyes on them. When he got to a unit, he was uncertain how to behave around such people. Now he becomes somewhat acquainted with them and moves on to a unit with a more realistic understanding of how the Marine Corps is made up."

### **"What we do now is issue them a challenge to live up to."**

Gen. McLernan added: "I believe that we are doing a good job here at Parris Island, considering the limitations imposed upon us. I think we are sending out recruits who are well trained in the basics of being a Marine. Whether we are right or not, of course, will be proven by only one thing. Another armed conflict.

"And, of course, none of us wish for that. But should it come, I believe our Parris Island Marines will show the nation that they are the best fighting force in the world, just as they always have."

Gen. McLernan's opinion is shared by a man who deals with recruits and DIs daily, and is well acquainted with the working-level realities of Parris Island. Master Gunnery Sgt. John Smedley, Big John Smedley, a former Parris Island recruit, Parris Island DI and now Senior DI in A Company, First Recruit Training Battalion.

Big John Smedley's vocabulary is as different from Gen. McLernan's as they are different in appearance. Smedley is six feet, four inches tall, weighs some 240 pounds, and none of it is fat. Smedley, despite his exalted noncom status, peels off a six-mile run every day, besides the running he does with recruits. He has a rugged, sun-creased, mahogany-colored face that makes Charles Bronson look like a pansy.

Says Big John Smedley: "I didn't believe in that brutality crap when I was a recruit here in the '50s. I didn't believe in it when I was a DI in 1961 and I don't believe in it now.

"Back then I was motivated by fear. When I was a junior DI we motivated the recruits with fear. Now they're motivated by enthusiasm. They do it because they want to do it. And don't forget that 'IT' is a hell of a lot tougher to do physically than it used to be. And they're motivated by a competitive spirit — like out on the

pugil-stick course. Now we teach 'em, don't scare 'em.

"And we've got a hell of a lot of work to do with the raw material we get. One thing that really pisses me off, is what the American family and the American schools are doing to their kids. They aren't teaching them any discipline or any responsibility or any idea even of patriotism, duty to country, or whatever you want to call it.

"We can do a lot here, but we have got to work with the raw material we get and if that's bad, then we can't do it all. We can't accomplish miracles."

A general, a colonel, sergeants major, gunnery sergeants, DIs: they all have some comment on recruit training at Parris Island. Much of it, of course, is in the same vein with variations according to rank, experience and duties. How about the recruits themselves, the ultimate object of everyone from general to DI?

The author interviewed a number of them ranging from first-day, shaven-headed, frightened, bewildered novitiates, to troopers-to-be at the rifle range (they've almost got it made), to some men from a graduating series of platoons 2016 through 2018.

Some of their comments:

A first-day skinhead: "I'm scared to death. I'm going to keep my mouth shut. And I'm going to do my best to get out of here as a Marine. That's what I joined up to do."

Pvt. William Bartlett of Foster, Mass., the day before qualification on the rifle range: "Sir, the private really likes it. I have gained 10 pounds. I don't find the discipline too bad. The physical training is tough but not so tough you can't stand it. Of course, I had a better break than most. My brother came through here last year and he told me pretty much what to expect."

Pvt. Bartlett prepared to advance to the 500-yard line as his relay was notified it was its time to fire. "You know," he grinned, "I won't qualify today even if I fire a possible here. But I'm sure as hell going to tomorrow."

And these comments from men who were now Marines but had been recruits only minutes before — the graduates of Platoon 1018.

Pvt. Chris Kahn, son of a physician, whose parents visited Parris Island that day of their son's graduation from boot camp: "When I first got here, I wondered what I had gotten myself into. But I adjusted pretty quickly and in three or four weeks I knew I was going to make it. Physically it was a little easier than I expected. Some of the guys had a very different time, especially those who came from homes where their parents were permissive."

His mother, a petite, attractive brunette, added, "Of course I don't know exactly what the discipline is like here, but I can assure you it was strict at home." Pvt.



Drill Instructor explains fine points of M16 rifle action to recruit who is about mid-way through training.

Kahn smiled and nodded.

Pvt. Don Brown of Lincoln County, Ga., sipped at a Styrofoam coffee cup as he prepared to leave his recruit squad room for the last time on graduation day of 1018. "I'm sure glad this is over. It was really tough, although not as bad as I expected. My dad went through here in 1953 and I heard stories from him. I guess it was really tough then. And I heard stories from guys back home who came through here just a few years ago. I know now that those were just sea stories.

"It was probably harder for me than most because I was the baby of the family." His mother agreed. "That's right. He was our pet and this is the first time anybody ever made him do anything he didn't want to. It was really good for him and we are really, really proud of him."

**T**HE Dago said to the Coal Miner, Cleveland, and the General (his father was an actual general officer in the U.S. Army), "I can't believe it. We're actually going to get out of this fucking place. Going home for 10 days. Christ! This has been the longest 14 weeks of my life." The others nodded and looked curiously at the General who was actually weeping. He very nearly had not made it — but the Coal Miner had carried his rifle and the Dago his pack the last half of their final forced march and the Musclemans had carried him for the last 500 yards of it.

Sgt. Davis walked silently into the squad bay and someone bawled, "TOON, TEN-HUT." The troops sprang to attention in front of their bunks.

The sergeant carried a large box which

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he shook. It rattled. "Awright, you people. These are your emblems. You get to keep 'em now. No more turning 'em in after weekend parade. Damn if I think you deserve 'em. Worst platoon I ever took through here. Don't know how in hell you ever made Honor Platoon." Then he and Cpl. Miles began affixing the emblems onto the uniforms.

Miles muttered to one: "This makes you a real Marine now. Make sure you don't disgrace it." And some of the men could have sworn that Davis' thin lips were actually trying to break into a grin. A little later they were out on the Second Battalion parade ground and the colonel (first time they had ever laid eyes on him) was pinning marksmanship medals on their chests. The Musclemans stood at attention even more rigidly than the rest of them because as Platoon Guide he bore the Guidon that denoted 219 as the Honor Platoon.

Then, for the last time at Parris Island, the men in 219 heard the command, "Plah-toon dismissed." And they broke into a great roar of approval as they raced back to the barracks, a formless, chattering mob.

They didn't see it but Davis and Miles really were grinning now and Davis said, "We'll collect that beer tonight. Damn fine platoon. Damn fine bunch of kids. They'll do OK." Miles agreed.

Platoon 1018 and the other three platoons in its series behaved much the same. They were not an honor platoon. They don't have that program at PI anymore but they do have Honor Men. The four privates who score highest overall in classwork and physical ability receive a merit promotion to PFC and win a set of Marine dress blues. The four highest marksmen also are promoted meritoriously but don't get the blues. And these days it's not just the colonel commanding the battalion who gives the little talk and hands out the awards. It is the general commanding Parris Island. Also now, there are many more parents, friends and other relatives visiting PI on graduation day, than 30 years ago. It is indeed a different time and a different generation.

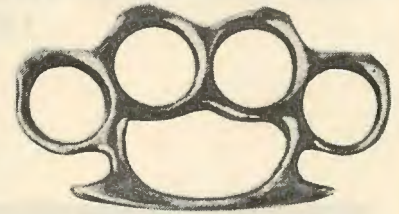
**P**LATOON 219 had a sudden, unexpected "reunification," a few years after graduation from boot camp in 1948. It was brought about by a man named Kim Il Sung, the bloodthirsty communist dictator of North Korea. Many of the men were brought together in something called the First Marine Provisional Brigade after Gen. Douglas MacArthur sent a message reading, "Request immediate assignment Marine Regimental Combat Team and supporting Air Group for duty this command (Far East)..."

The men from 219 and those platoons that preceded and followed it were, as one observer remarked, "scattered from hell

Continued on page 90

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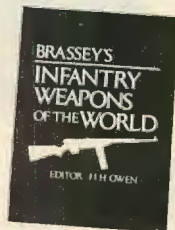
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# THE BIG ONE

## SOF STAFFERS TAKE 7TH AND 14TH PLACES IN CONTROVERSIAL 1979 IPSC NATIONAL MATCHES

by N.E. MacDougald



**D**AWN broke brightly over craggy peaks July fourth as America's best pistoleros prepared for the 1979 nationals. Hours later, IPSC president Jeff Cooper barked a brief opening speech punctuated by a cannon's roar. Thus opened the IPSC championship in the mountains of Park City, Utah.

Pistolsmith Don Fisher, 2199 S. Kitteredge Way, Aurora, Colorado, liked the IPSC nationals, on the whole. He built four guns that were shot at the nationals, including second place winner Ross Seifried's.

### **"Ignorant people squabbling constantly."**

But one definition of IPSC, overheard from a Wisconsin lad, was "ignorant people squabbling constantly."

Even before the match began, there was a division between the "martial arts" shooters and the "gamesmen." The martial artists felt the course should have been off-limits to shooters until it opened officially on Independence day. The gamesmen, however, were delighted to walk

through the four stages and rehearse their tactics.

Cooper was aware of the division and responded: "The theory of a cold shoot is fine but in practice you can't do it. There is only one way you can hold a cold-turkey match and that is to bring all the contestants into one holding tank and keep them there until the last person finishes shooting. And that is not feasible with a group larger than 25. I recall one cold shoot that I attended. Although I shot well, I didn't enjoy it a damn bit at the time."

Later, Cooper shared his thoughts on the 1980 IPSC championships: "The big challenge with the 1980 nationals will be to test the very things we've tested here. Test them more fully, if possible more simply, and yet in a way distinctly different than we've done here. In other words, the challenges should test the same skills, but test them by a different set of parameters." Prospective locale for next year's match is Newport News, Virginia, sometime in the fall.

Veteran combat shooter Ray Chapman, founder of the Chapman Academy of

Practical Shooting, 609 East Broadway, Columbia, Missouri, offered his opinion of the 1979 nationals: "It's really a tough match. Of course the best shooters in the country are supposed to be here. But there are several things that are just so hard to do that you must have luck to get through unscathed. The school exercises, for instance, have a phase where you have to shoot four shots in two seconds. Well, that is just too fast. You can't shoot that fast under control, you have to go out of control. And I think everyone should stay under control."

"They're having a lot of trouble with the field reaction course. The turning targets are not working properly and they're working one way for some shooters and another way for others. While it's fun to shoot and it's very practical, it's not very good for competition because each shooter doesn't have an equal chance to shoot the same score."

Chapman's academy offers basic, intermediate, and advanced courses of instruction ranging from \$145 to \$250.

When asked what he would do if he were running the nationals, Chapman

replied, "I think I would make it a much more difficult shooting match in that you have to be a good shot to score highly. Make it a little bit less athletic, a little bit more toward the practical shooting side." Chapman also felt that ventilation in the darkhouse was insufficient and unfair to judges who had to spend hours down there.

National championships throb with tension from both participants and spectators and this year's Park City match was no exception. From the onset, contestants revealed tension in various ways. Some joked continually, others griped about other shooters or about course idiosyncracies. Still others could be seen eating compulsively.

Cooper was on hand a few days early to design the course of fire. On Tuesday, 3 July 1979, the day before the championship began, Cooper explained briefly the purpose and particulars of the nationals.

### **"Our purpose is to decide the membership of the U.S. National team."**

"The emphasis is roughly what it has been in the past, although every year we try to do it a little more efficiently. The purpose of the U.S. Nationals is to decide the membership on the U.S. National team. The top five shooters will comprise the team."

Renowned gunsmith Armand Swenson was on hand and saved one entrant from disqualification because of an accidental discharge. Harry Dexter, a Beverley Hills, Calif., policeman, was surprised when his .45 discharged during reloading. Dexter swore his finger was nowhere near the trigger. Swenson looked the pistol over and pronounced it mechanically sound. After Dexter insisted the gun was at fault, Swenson again field-stripped the weapon and found the rear sight screw was too long and touched lightly on the firing pin. Thus, when the slide slid home, the gun fired. Cooper saw the phenomenon, agreed, and let Dexter continue. Dexter's smile said it all, as he trotted back to the course.

### **"IPSC is more physically vigorous."**

Another veteran combat shooter, winner of the Bianchi shoot on 3-5 May 1979, held at the Chapman Academy, was Ron Lerch. A native of Brooklyn, now living in Valencia, Calif., Lerch, 37, is an investor. He won \$1,500 cash and approximately \$2,000 in merchandise at the Bianchi Cup.

Grinned Lerch, "The Bianchi match attracts shooters from other shooting disciplines like bullseye and PPC. Because the IPSC program is more physically vigorous, more people with physical hindrances are attracted to the Bianchi Cup."

## THE "SHOOTING MACHINE"

**A**S Mickey Fowler will freely acknowledge, he didn't really win the 1979 IPSC National shoot at Park City, Utah. The "Shooting Machine" did. The "Shooting Machine" is the 180-member pistol club near Ensanada, Calif., to which Fowler belongs. Much more is going to be heard from and about this collection of super-shooters.

Not that Fowler, 32, is any slouch with a Colt .45 pistol in his hand. He took this year's Nationals with a score of 342.660, defeating last year's champ, Ross Siefert of Colorado.

But as Fowler, who is 6-1, weighs 170 and sports a mop of blonde hair and neatly trimmed moustache, explains it: "It's really the club and particularly my shooting coach, Mike Dalton. Mike's a two-time winner of the Southwest Pistol League championship and that's as tough a match as you'll want to shoot in. Mike could have won this match just as easily as I and it wouldn't have bothered me if he had."

Dalton, standing nearby, agreed: "We operate on a team concept and we all work together, helping each other."

Fowler, a self-employed manufacturer, said, "Our club is serious about shooting and we constantly work at it. Fourteen of the top shooters in the club get together each weekend and work out. We literally go into training on weekends, physically and mentally. And we work on fundamentals. Constantly on fundamentals.

"What is the most important thing about shooting, you ask? No problem in answering that question. The thing that makes everything else about shooting pale into insignificance is trigger control. All the fundamentals are important, of course, but proper control of that trigger is the most important of all."

The other members of the "Shooting Machine" agree with him on that and their record at Park City would indicate they're right. Men from the "Machine" won every single event at the match and six of the 16 finalists were from the club. (Fowler won the Obstacle Course and the Practical Exercise.)

Fowler is a well-conditioned and coordinated athlete. Before entering combat shooting as his chief form of recreation, he drove Formula 5,000 road race cars and used to do a great deal of flat track motorcycle racing.

The 1979 champion has only been shooting for 2½ years and started combat shooting, "When I just happened to be out at the range one day and saw how much more fun it was

than either bull's-eye or police shooting."

Fowler has owned and fired rifles and handguns all his life — "My dad gave me a .357 mag when I was just a little kid" — but he had never been serious about shooting until he got into the "Shooting Machine."

"I shoot a Hoag-built .45 Colt — I think Hoag's the best gunsmith going. People disagree with that, but it's my opinion. I do my own handloading and use Hinsley-Gibbs No. 68 200-grain semi-wadcutter bullets powered by six grains of No. 231 Winchester-Western powder. My rig is a Gordon Davis crossdraw."

SOF observed that few shooters in this match had used a crossdraw and Fowler observed: "I like it because it gives me more control. I like the gun in front of me — the way I carry it, the piece is very nearly in my peripheral vision."

Fowler, who has fired in two other major IPSC style matches — Bianchi and Larami — says of the sport: "I'd like to see it develop into a paying proposition. This is an expensive sport and, ideally, it should be at least self-sustaining. I know it'll never pay off like professional golf or tennis, but I think it would be nice if you could at least buy your own guns, ammo, rigs and pay for your travel expenses out of winnings.

"To accomplish that, it'll take promotion and that's why I'm happy to see guys like you [SOF reporter] here. Too bad there weren't more of them. I think someone from the *Rifleman* [publication of the National Rifle Association.] should have been here. I know they don't sponsor or sanction this kind of shoot but, still, you'd think they would have enough interest in shooting to show up at a national championship."

Two questions: How do you think you'll do in South Africa? And will you be going to the next National at Newport News, Va., next year?

"The answer to your first question is, I think I'll do real well over there. I know they are good shooters but I'll be in good physical shape. I plan to do a lot of running and weight lifting between now and then. And, of course, I'll be out there on the Shooting Machine range working on those fundamentals. I wouldn't miss next year's nationals for the world."

And one suspects that 32-year-old Larry Michael Fowler of Chatsworth, Calif., will indeed do very well in South Africa of which he says, "I'm really looking forward to that trip. I've wanted to go there all my life." —B.P.

When asked about the IPSC national match, Lerch commented: "The '79 IPSC course is difficult; the school exercises are shot under tight time limits. The obstacle course is one where you have to be very much in control of yourself. Otherwise it is easy to get hurt. The field reaction course is better suited to a 9mm weapon, namely a Browning, because reloading with a .45 on this particular course eats up time. A 9mm also has an advantage on the obstacle course. If I could change anything it would be the obstacle course. I'd make it a simpler shoot."

After the nationals were over, however, Lerch told a different story: "This whole contest was like a sandlot baseball game ... very unprofessional ... very unfair ... This is the last one I'll come to." Lerch left before the awards ceremony on Saturday night, 7 July 1979.

Among this year's inconsistencies were rules regarding the "Rhodesian wall" obstacle (see photo page 57). One of the objects of the exercise is that the shooter lean left and lean right, using a rope in the middle for balance, thus shooting with strong and weak hands. Some contestants, however, instead crossed their arms and continued to shoot with their strong hand. This was awkward and counter to common sense because the shooter exposed more of his or her body to theoretical hostile fire.

Other rules were bent. The definition of major and minor caliber was made clear and simple. Anyone having any doubts about handloads had two choices: overload to be on the safe side, or use factory ammo. But at least two shooters took a chance. The ironic part is they were damn fine shots. Dick Thomas and Raul Walters, both of Columbia, Mo., found their handloads underpowered. Both left quietly before the match ended.

Another area of controversy was the use of mechanical devices to run targets. To simulate combat, targets must move. Static targets simply are not realistic. Thus the dilemma: either simulate reality and put up with mechanical malfunctions or play it safe with static targets and complain about the lack of reality. IPSC chose the former, and drew some flak for it. Grumblings got louder and louder about the field reaction course. Seems some targets turned when they wanted to, frustrating both participants and the inventor of the Duelatron system, John Farnum. Things got so bad by Friday that Cooper considered eliminating all scores fired on the reaction course.

To complicate matters, other shooters pointed out that the moving target on the obstacle course was likewise capricious. Sometimes it was smooth, sometimes jerky, sometimes fast, sometimes slow. If Cooper wanted to eliminate the field reac-



**ABOVE:** Managing Editor Bob Poos presents Mickey Fowler with SOF trophy for 1979 overall winner as IPSC officials look on. **RIGHT:** Top five U.S. National IPSC shooters who will go to South Africa are from left SOF staffer Chuck Taylor, Jerry Usher, Tom Campbell, Ross Seyfried and top shooter Mickey Fowler



## CHAMPIONSHIP CLASS

Rank		Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Shoot Off	Total
1	Mickey Fowler	81.000	65.000	83.160	73.500	40	342.660
2	Ross Seyfried	79.875	73.000	50.688	86.000	50	339.563
3	Craig Gifford	61.500	76.000	77.418	84.000	30	328.918
4	Thomas E. Campbell	63.750	70.000	73.662	86.000	35	328.412
5	Leonard Knight	72.000	76.000	78.546	76.500	10	313.046
6	Ray Chapman	73.500	59.000	78.618	81.500	15	307.618
7	Chuck Taylor	72.750	72.000	51.024	86.500	25	307.274
8	Ron Sharp	66.750	69.000	57.636	80.000	25	293.386
9	Jerry Usher	74.250	74.000	58.098	83.500	—	289.848
10	Mike Fichman	73.125	67.000	67.788	79.500	—	287.413
11	Michael Horne	66.375	67.000	67.272	82.500	—	283.147
12	Mike Dalton	75.375	64.000	54.882	88.500	—	282.757
13	Jim Scordato	75.750	69.000	61.014	76.000	—	281.764
14	Ken Hackathorn	71.250	64.000	63.012	77.500	—	275.762
15	Steve Blankenbiller	66.750	70.000	54.204	84.000	—	274.954
16	John Shaw	77.250	45.000	69.912	82.500	—	274.662
17	Ray Neal	67.125	56.000	67.176	82.500	—	272.801
18	Ronald Lerch	76.500	68.000	50.520	73.500	—	268.520

tion scores, argued a vocal minority, then let him toss out the obstacle course scores also. And there was the rub: if both sets of scores were thrown out, half the match was void and what was left? A legitimate argument and a very real problem.

During a general membership meeting on Friday night, 6 July, Cooper sensed the dispute over mechanical devices and instead of ruling one way or the other, put the question to a vote. After a heated discussion, those present voted almost unanimously to keep all four scores of the shoot. The fact that everyone had his say precluded a confrontation.

**"You try to keep it simple and you try to make it fair."**

Cooper declared that a major shooting event should be a cross-section of the skills necessary in general pistolcraft and that since it was clearly impossible to cover everything, "What we try to do is test as many skills as we can, yet make the course administratively possible." A totally comprehensive course, he said, would allow too few people to run it because of too great intricacies. "So you try to keep it simple and you try to make it fair."

"Any sort of surprise contest has to have a certain amount of chance in it because the more that people shoot it, the more word gets back to those who have not; that the way to shoot stage two, for example, is not to reload until X point or Y point, and the word gets around."



## OTHER TOP SCORES

### TOP POLICE OFFICER

Dennis Tueller, Salt Lake City Police

### TOP POLICE OFFICER USING DUTY EQUIPMENT

Al Allen, Park City Police

### TOP FEMALE SHOOTER

Marilyn Stanford

### TOP REVOLVER SHOOTER

Mike Henry

### MIDDLEMAN AWARD

(Median Score)

William Simpson

STAGE 1:	School Exercises
1 Mickey Fowler	81.000
2 Ross Seyfried	79.875
3 John Shaw	77.250

STAGE II:	Field Reaction Course
1 Craig Gifford	76.000
2 Leonard Knight	76.000
3 Jerry Usher	74.000

STAGE III:	Obstacle Course
1 Mickey Fowler	83.160
2 Ray Chapman	78.618
3 Leonard Knight	78.546

STAGE IV:	Dark House
1 Mike Dalton	88.500
2 Chuck Taylor	86.500
3 Ross Seyfried	86.000

## 1979 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA PRACTICAL PISTOL TEAM

### FIRST TEAM

Ross Seyfried, Mickey Fowler, Thomas E. Campbell, Jerry Usher, Chuck Taylor.

### SECOND TEAM

Steve Blankenbiller, John Shaw, Leonard Knight, Ronald Lerch, Ray Neal.

The man who shoots it cold, he went on, shoots the best he knows how. Consequently, a man having more experience than 40 or 50 other shooters "has a certain edge. So what you want to do is rig a course where that (knowledge) isn't any more of an edge than necessary."

He declared IPSC had originally planned five stages, which were cut back to four because of time and having to run nearly 200 shooters through them. The first stage was school exercises (basics).

"The rest of the course," Cooper said, "depends largely on what you have available. We were fortunate here in having a



LEFT: A member of the "Shooting Machine," the California club whose members won every single event at the IPSC Nationals and member Mickey Fowler won the match itself, swings from a rope and fires with weak hand on "Rhodesian Wall" obstacle. ABOVE: Shooter at IPSC National match fires the "Major and Minor" pendulum problem on the combat course.

RIGHT: SOF Managing Editor Bob Poos (right) discuss pistols (what else) during the 1979 IPSC National Championships held at Park City, Utah. BELOW: SOF staffer Ken Hackathorn stands easy between relays at the IPSC National match. Hackathorn took 14th place, being one of two SOF men in the top 16, the other being Chuck Taylor, fifth.



basement that could be darkened. Many pistol confrontations take place at night or in dim light; therefore, a man who can use a pistol skillfully should be able to use it in the dark.

### "The scramble section has become a challenge."

"The scramble section, or obstacle course," he said, "has come to be something of a general challenge. It's based on the notion that one does not stand firm, in complete command of his nerves and wind when the flag flies. We can

assume that the real thing is helter-skelter, conducted under extreme stress. So here we stress the shooter, run him against his own best time and put him in odd, uncomfortable positions and ask him to hit as well as he can under the circumstances."

The last stage used disappearing targets. Cooper said, "While in the service, I became acquainted with pop-up targets, but they serve to alert the shooter by their movement — the movement catches your eye."

He described walking along a golf course with standing targets among bushes or in the shade, declaring, "Your eye,

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unless it's a very trained eye, won't pick them up. But once they pop out of the ground, you can't miss them. Not much of a challenge."

He felt a better target was one that was there at the start but then, after a given period, vanished. When John Farnum offered his turning targets, "We said, 'okay, let's do it like this: let's start that course in the bushes with all targets exposed and then at a predetermined interval we'll start pulling [turning] them, so that if you don't get them in time, they're gone and you can't shoot at them anymore. This became our field reaction course.'

**"The entire match can hang on one shot."**

"Those are the four qualifying sessions," Cooper said. "On Saturday morning, we go man-against-man; we'll take the top 16 scorers and pit them against each other for the overall title. That's where the real pressure starts. Two contestants face downrange. Each has an identical problem: two targets to hit, then hit a gong that stops the clock. We start off with the best two out of three. Then, as it gets harder toward the end, we go to the best three, then the best four; finally, you must have five points to defeat your opposition. If you get to the point that each man has four points, then the entire match hangs on one shot."

Pistolero Leonard Knight, 47, a heavy equipment operator from Apple Valley, California, had one of the best scores on the obstacle course.

Another complaint from one segment of shooters was that it was unfair to allow the results of a 16-man shootoff to determine the winner of the entire match.

Shooter Jerry Usher, 43, of Richmond, Indiana, is now a manager of a security firm. Usher is an ex-cop from Indio, California, who competed in the 1977 world championships in Rhodesia. He placed fifth in the 1977 U.S. nationals and eighth worldwide. In the 1979 nationals, he placed ninth.



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**SHE CAN SHOOT**

**S**USAN Yorty is slim, blonde, pretty, blue-eyed and graceful. And she can handle a .45 Colt semi-automatic pistol well enough to qualify for this year's IPSC National Championships at Park City, Utah.

This year's IPSC championship showed a turnout of six women shooters, more females than had ever shot in that level of competition before.

Sue Yorty, 35, wasn't the top woman shooter this year — that honor went to Marilyn Stanford. But the little (five-foot, 95-lb.) blonde from Kirkland, Wash., helped organize the match and her infectious enthusiasm made her one of the most popular shooters there.

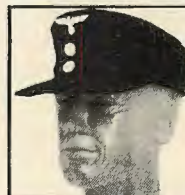
Mrs. Yorty doesn't feel that the fact she is female — and a small female — hinders her in combat shooting.

"In some ways it helps. I'm more agile than some of these big guys, can crawl through the tunnel faster and can scale the obstacles more quickly. The only reason I'm not a better combat shooter than I am, is that I simply haven't been at it long enough. I'll get better, you'll see."

Mrs. Yorty got interested in shooting, particularly combat shooting, for the same reason many women have: "I was a gun widow. My husband was at the range all the time. I decided if it was that much fun, there must be something to it. So I started. And I found that it was a heck of a lot of fun, really got into it and now I'm hooked."

So the macho man's world of combat pistol shooting might be getting feminized some. So long as it's by people like Sue Yorty, that's cool.

—Bob Poos



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# THE VIETNAM WAR:

An Illustrated History of the Conflict in Southeast Asia

By Bernard C. Nalty

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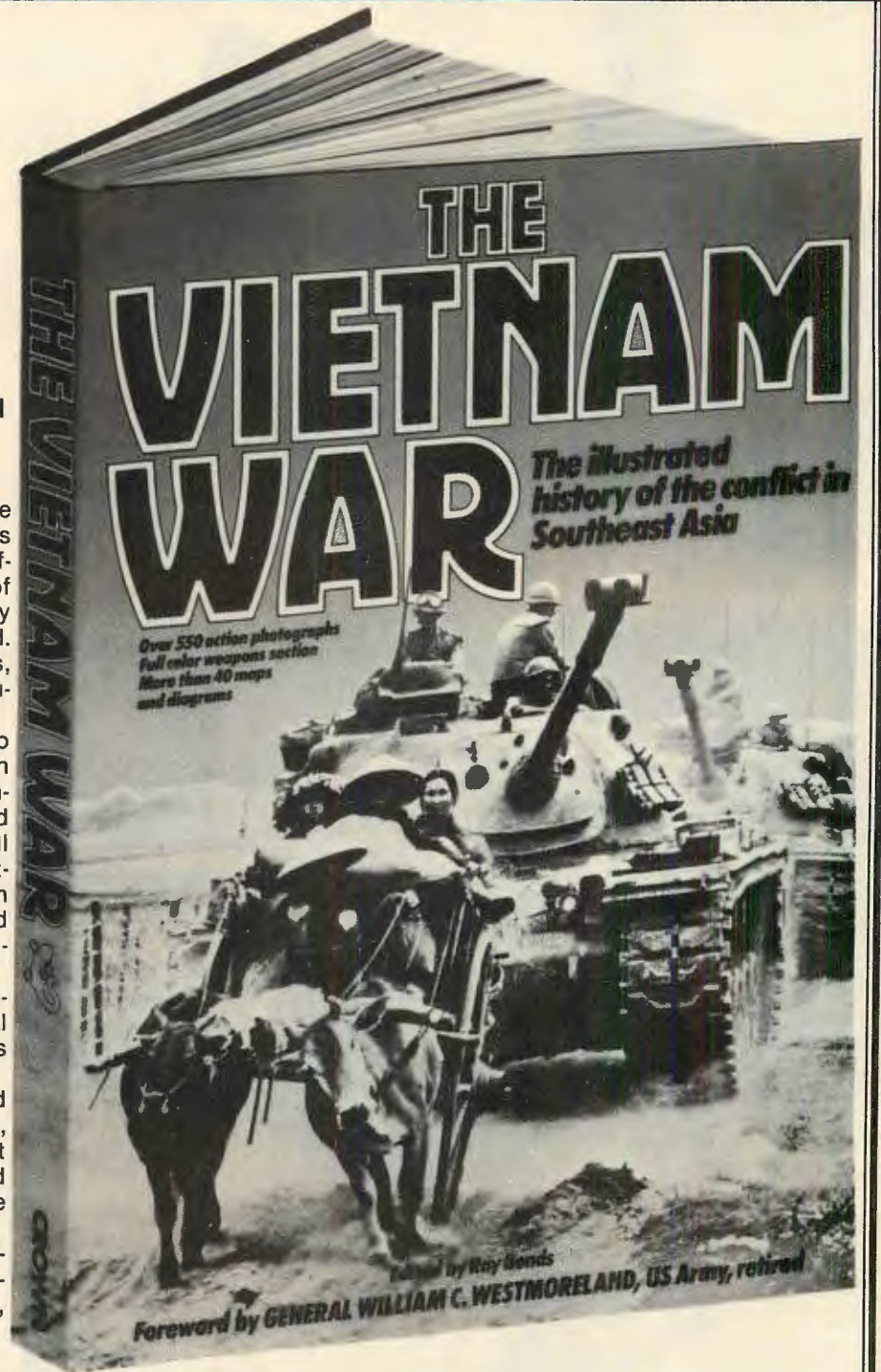
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# FIGHTING FOR KEEPS



**LEFT—Step 1: Straight-line**  
**Avoid line of attack.**  
**45 degrees at angle from it.**

by Rafael Lima



**Step 4: Maintaining a**  
**firm grasp on weapon, in-**  
**terject yourself between**  
**him and his line of travel.**  
**Use your leg as an obsta-**  
**cle and follow through**  
**with a throw.**



**Step 5: By prying and**  
**twisting, you can secure**  
**weapon and direct attack**  
**from standing position if**  
**necessary.**



attack. ABOVE—Step 2: Sidestep weapon by turning



Step 3: Use attacker's momentum against himself by allowing him to continue his thrust.

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# WHISPERING The Crossbow KILLER

by Jack Bowman

**K**OREA, November 1950. The 17th Regimental Combat Team of the 7th Infantry Division trapped behind enemy lines. In minus 42 degree temperatures, on the day after Thanksgiving, helicopters brought in four crossbows. 7th Infantry headquarters had decided that the 17th R.C.T. should stay behind and harass the enemy.

The next night they took the crossbows and two members of the team waited in a ditch near the Manchurian border. Four other men on the team waited on a hill above them with guns.

A Chinese supply truck roared by within eight yards of the hidden crossbowmen. One released the four-bladed arrow as the truck came broadside. It came to a halt in the ditch a few yards up the road. The team walked cautiously up to it and opened the door. The Chinese soldier driving had died instantly. The arrow penetrated the truck door and entered the driver underneath his arm.

This is one instance where a crossbow has been used in modern warfare.

## WAR HISTORY

The last time the crossbow was used on a large scale was 55 years earlier in the Chinese-Japanese War of 1895. The Chinese used repeating crossbows with poisoned arrows to defend their fortifications.

However, on a much smaller scale, the crossbow has been used in every major and minor war of any duration since then.

In the British War Museum in London there are two crossbows that threw grenades during World War I.

In 1944, the Office of Scientific Research designed two crossbows for underground and commando work. These were rubber powered and came in both a pistol and rifle model. They were code named Big Joe and Little Joe Pedal.

During World War II Major J.M.T.F. "Mad Jack" Churchill of the Manchester Regiment killed a German infantryman at 40 yards with a crossbow during the retreat to Dunkirk.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**J**ACK Bowman is recognized as the world's leading authority on hunting crossbows. Holder of the national precision crossbow championship, he is also currently Ohio custom-crossbow division champion and Kentucky state division champion. In 1977 he won the U.S. national crossbow championship.

Bowman, co-founder of the National Crossbow Hunters Association, has been a key figure in obtaining state crossbow hunting seasons and has written crossbow articles for national and regional magazines.

When queried by SOF about the crossbow in *Wild Geese* (January '79) making "about as much racket as a .22" (SOF, April '79), Bowman replied, "That's wrong. In the movie, the crossbow had a Barnett aluminum limb which might have been noisier than the fiberglass one they're using now.

"At 20 yards, you'd have heard a sound but not a .22 crack. It've been more of a whump like the noise you'd hear if you dropped a 10-pound rock to the ground from about six feet."

He also said his name helped him originally to get interested in archery.

—M.L. Jones

Montagnard tribesmen used primitive crossbows extensively against the Viet Cong. And VC used primitive but deadly crossbow traps.

### CROSSBOW EFFICIENCY

The crossbow, when used within its limitations, is a most effective weapon.

A crossbow is a bow limb mounted horizontally on a gun-like stock. The bow is drawn and held by a catch in the lock. The trigger releases the energy stored in the bow.

Between the lock and the limb is the track. The track serves two purposes. It guides the arrow and stabilizes the string.

The crossbow is equipped with a front and rear sight; the latter is moved up to raise one's shot group, while the front sight is moved left to direct the group to the right.

The front of the stock usually has a foot stirrup to aid in cocking the bow. One inserts a foot into the stirrup to hold the bow and pulls back on the string to cock it. Some bows are not equipped with stirrups. With these one either adds poly-cord for a stirrup or cocks the bow in the stomach or chest. (I have cocked bows drawing 150 pounds into my chest.)

The bow limbs (even though the bow may be in one piece it has a right and left limb) have a face and belly. The face is toward the front and the belly is toward the lock. At each end of the limbs is the nock. The string attaches to the nocks.

### THE STRING

The string consists of nocks, center serving, and cords. The center serving is the part of the string that is in contact with the arrow, catch, and track. This serving is the first part of the crossbow to wear out since it is subjected to so much friction. One should constantly check and wax the center serving as well as wax the track. If the serving wears through, one should hand serve it with cotton twine and wax it thoroughly.

The distance between the uncocked bow string serving and the belly of the limb is called the brace height. This is important in achieving top performance from the bow. If the brace is too short, the bow string may cross over the front of the bow and reverse. If the brace is too long it may be drawing more weight but getting less energy into the arrow.

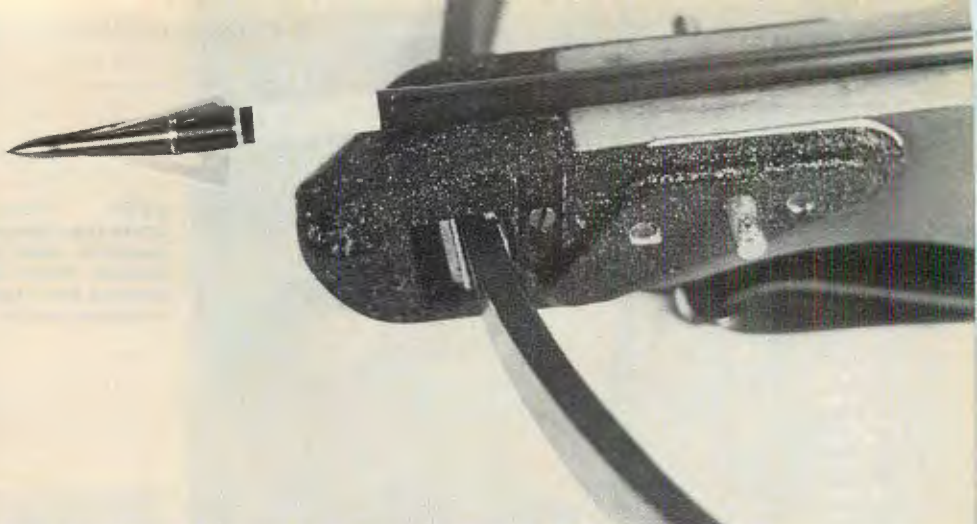
Knowing the nomenclature of a crossbow will do one very little good if he doesn't know how to use the bow.

### OPERATING PROCEDURE

The action occurs between the catch and brace height. This is where one should concentrate one's efforts.

The shooter should always match the width of his track with the proper diameter arrow. The string should hit the end of the arrow just above center.

The string must be cocked or drawn straight back. The best way to assure a proper draw is to place the index fingers against the track while gripping the string



To use poisoned arrows, shaft must be long enough to extend an inch or more in front of track. Components of poisoned arrows are change-a-point arrows, electrical tape, balloons and poison. Roll is necessary at beginning of poison holder to open on impact.

to begin the draw. Many people have a tendency to roll their hands while drawing the string back. This will torque the string and upon release it will return to its original position.

Even though there are many crossbows to choose from, the modern bush bow is the most suitable for ambush. The bush bow's qualities are maneuverability, availability and dependability — MAD.

The bush bow is not the fastest or most powerful but its small dimensions, within 32 inches by 32 inches, make it highly maneuverable in bush country. Most of them are not equipped with foot stirrups in order to reduce overall size.

Bush bows are popular and are available throughout the world. They are used both for hunting and target competition. Target competition will put about 10 years of hunting life and wear on them. They are dependable. The Horton Magnum's stock and trigger mechanism is guaranteed for the life of the owner.

### "WILDCAT"

At the top of the bush bow list is the

Barnett "Wildcat."

The "Wildcat" has proven its dependability as a tournament bow. There has been some trouble with splintering limbs but B.P. Barnett of Wolverhampton, England, has redesigned their molds and believes they have the problem solved.

The "Wildcat" measures 31 inches by 27 inches and weighs only six pounds. The standard limb draws 150 pounds. Crossbows are measured in inch pounds. This is a combination of inches drawn by maximum pounds drawn. The "Wildcat" draws 2100 inch pounds. In comparison to other crossbows, all bush bows are going to be relatively low in inch pounds and low in velocity. However, what they sacrifice in inch pounds they make up in maneuverability.

### ARROWS

Arrows are measured by their weight in grains and the diameter of the nock. The nock of an arrow is the part that is placed against the string.

Due to their stability, Bowman prefers these small, light-razor arrowheads.





**LEFT:** Modern crossbow hunters recognize need for ambush. Many use portable tree stands when deer hunting.



**ABOVE:** Front sight of crossbow is simple. Move pin left or right for windage.



**LEFT:** Rear sight of crossbow is moved up for distance and down for close.

A 350-5/16 is a 350-grain arrow with a nock diameter of 5/16 inch. The weight of the arrow, to a great extent, determines the effective range. The heavier the arrow the greater the effective range. Working against this is the trajectory. The heavier the arrow the slower the cast and the more radical the trajectory. You are after a minimum acceptable weight and a maximum speed. For most purposes a 350-grain is best.

A "Wildcat" takes a 350-5/16 arrow. The 150-pound limb will cast this arrow at 205 feet per second for an energy of 33 foot pounds.

The "Wildcat" is equipped with a non-adjustable scope mounting block. It also has an elevated rear sight and a pin front sight.

The "Wildcat" is produced in England but is available throughout the world.

#### "MAGNUM"

Next on the bush bow list is the Horton "Magnum." It has been in production

since 1965. The stock is made of cast aluminum and coated with nylon.

The "Magnum" measures 27 inches by 28 inches and draws 150 pounds for 1800 inch pounds. It uses a 350-11/32 arrow and casts it at 195 feet per second. It releases 30 foot pounds of energy. The "Magnum" weighs seven pounds. It is equipped with an aluminum alloy limb. The scope mount is adjustable both horizontally and vertically.

#### "SAFARI"

Newly introduced by Horton of Scotland is the "Safari." Weighing only five pounds, it is the smallest of the bush bows with dimensions of 26X28 inches. It also uses 350-11/32 arrows. It will cast these arrows more than 200 feet per second for more than 30 foot pounds of energy. This small, light bow draws 1500 inch pounds. The "Safari" also incorporates a trajectory compensator device into the scope mount, similar to the trajectory adjusting devices in gun scopes.

However, this one is built into the bow and allows for crossbows' more radical trajectory changes.

#### "COMMANDO"

B.P. Barnett has also introduced a new bush bow. The "Commando" is a self-cocking 2100 inch pound bow. The limb draws 175 pounds but is drawn by a lever built into the stock.

The "Commando" measures 27 inches by 32 inches and weighs 8½ pounds. It has a non-adjustable scope mount. It will shoot a 350-5/16 arrow at 205 feet per second for an initial energy of 33 foot pounds.

#### ACCURACY

Bush bows are capable of shooting an inch spread for each 10 yards traveled. At 30 yards they can shoot a three-inch group. However, these groups are with top tournament shooters. A more realistic group would be six inches at 30 yards.

Due to the speed, in the 200-foot-per-second range, these bows will drop about one foot in 20 yards, an additional 18 inches from 20 to 30, and about three more feet on to 40.

This trajectory limits the range that one can hit the target even though he has tight groups. Effective range is about 30 yards.

To hit a man with a bush bow at 40 yards, one must correctly estimate the distance to the target to within eight yards in front and four yards behind. This is a total of 12 yards or within 25 percent of the distance.

In comparison, the trajectory of a 30-06 with a 125-grain projectile allows one to correctly estimate within 60 percent, the distance to hit a man at 350 yards.



Author dropped this squirrel with Horton Magnum crossbow.





Wayne Stutzman of Troy, Mich., took this Russian boar with modern lightweight crossbow.

In fact, the odds are more than two to one in favor of estimating the range and hitting a man at around 350 yards with a 30-06 than hitting one at 40 yards with a bush bow.

Obviously, the crossbow is suitable only for ambush. It is not a defensive weapon and should not be used without a .45 auto or something similar for back-up.

#### IN USE

The Montagnard tribesmen supposedly followed a marching line of Viet Cong and shot the last man in the line with a crossbow. They shot him through the heart so he would not cry out. They would then pick off the next one up the line. If they did this they have far more guts than I. I have seen deer and other big game run several yards with part of their heart shot away. Man is far more tenacious of life than any game I have hunted.

There is no shock to speak of with an arrow. It kills by hemorrhage or puncturing vital organs. The only shot that I know that ever brought any type of large animal down in its tracks is a spine shot.

You may be anticipating a head shot. As a rule this is an inadequate shot. The human skull has adapted to having slow-moving projectiles bounce off. Even though a direct hit in the center of the

skull would pass through, the size of the kill area is limited to about three-by-three inches.

Due to its limited range, the crossbow is most suitable for night operations.

#### NIGHT OPS

These require a low light-sighting system. One of the best sighting systems available for the close shot is the single point. This places a small dot on the aiming point. The problem with the single point is that it will not work in low light conditions.

To equip a single point or Weaver quick point for low light conditions, one needs a one-inch water hose about six inches long, a single-cell penlight flashlight, a one-inch hose clamp, and a black rubber bottle cork.

The hose clamp attaches the hose to the sight, and one then inserts the flashlight. The flashlight plugs in with the bottle cork.

To psychologically harass the enemy, the shooter may want to use poisoned arrows.

#### POISONED ARROWS

For a poisoned arrow, one needs only a roll of electrical tape, some small long balloons, and poison.

They can be made only with change-a-point arrows. Take off the point. Stretch

the balloon on about one inch of the front of the arrow shaft. Cut off the excess balloon. Then apply tape to the rear of the balloon. Cut a small piece of tape from the roll. This tape should not be more than 1/8 of an inch wide. Place the tape about 1/8-inch back from the front of the balloon. This will start a roll. The roll is necessary to open the balloon upon impact.

Fill the balloon with poison.

I filled mine with red paint and test shot it into styrofoam. The balloon began opening after the first inch and spread red paint for the next 10.

One should use a broadhead-tipped arrow with poison. A broadhead will to some extent make the arrow unstable. The large, about five-inch, feathers at the back of the shaft stabilize the broadhead.

Broadheads with the largest blade area obviously cut the largest hole but they are more difficult to stabilize and also will not penetrate as far. I prefer the smaller, lighter razor heads such as the Wasp-3.

With states legalizing the crossbow for deer hunting, there is renewed interest in it. Ohio and Kentucky now have crossbow deer seasons. However, there are many myths associated with the crossbow. It is basically limited to a silent, night, ambush weapon. For this purpose it cannot be beaten.



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# SOF SUPERSTAR

## VS

# Dragon Throne



### THE DWARF WHO ROUSED THE GIANT

by Robert Roman

tary glory, he boasted to students that some day he would lead great armies in battle. This announcement was often received with hilarity by some of his listeners as they gazed at little Lea and his distorted body.

“Someday I’ll lead great armies in battle.”

#### WHO IS HOMER LEA?

“HOMER Lea,” moaned Colby Li, “what we need is another Homer Lea.”

I didn’t pay much attention. We were sitting on a balcony of the Edgewater Hotel just outside Tsingtao, sipping vodka and lemonade and watching a splendid light and sound show. It was civil war China and the communists, the *balu-chen*, Shantung people called them, meaning the people of the Red Eighth Army, were bombarding hell out of the battered, punch-drunk Nationalist divisions around the city’s perimeter. It was a cloudy night. Flashes reflected on the clouds, and there was that familiar muted rumbling. This was the fourth *balu-chen* offensive against Tsingtao and each time the rumbling became louder.

Finally I asked Colby who in the hell is Homer Lea. Colby, by the way, was a thoroughly Americanized Kuomintang police colonel with his own private army. He was also North China’s premier black marketeer, gunrunner extraordinary, owner of an elegant establishment known as The House of a Thousand Assholes, and manager of 57 White Russian whores who worked the China Coast from Chingwangtao to Canton. Colby was also my mentor in Asian criminology. I only hoped to be as successful as Colby Li.

“Homer Lea,” said Colby, hesitating, “was the world’s greatest soldier. A military genius. He toppled the Dragon Throne. That’s what I was told by one of my instructors at Whampoa Military Academy. He himself was trained by Homer Lea. Beyond that I know little.”

Colby never got a chance to tell me much more than that. Next time

around, the *balu-chen* took Tsingtao and blew away Colby Li and virtually every other Chinese man, woman and child who had ever been remotely associated with the Americans. This massacre, although unpublicized, is a matter of record.

Nor did I ever quite forget Homer Lea. Over the years I came across bits and pieces such as, “He has been hailed as one of the greatest military geniuses of history,” and “perhaps the most gifted American who ever joined a foreign legion.”

Was he? I don’t know, but here is his story.

—Robert Roman

**D**AMN clever, these Chinese. Take Chin Shih-huang, the first emperor of China. He founded the Chinese Empire in the third century B.C. One of his first imperial acts was to behead, bury alive and otherwise radically terminate the country’s scholars. That showed real foresight — because 2,300 years later, this empire was to be destroyed by a scholar — a Stanford University dropout named Homer Lea.

Lea was probably the most wildly underqualified soldier of fortune and revolutionary in history. Here’s his basic ID: He was born in Denver, Colorado, 17 November 1876, of average American parents. Lea’s admirers referred to his deformity as spinal curvature; in fact, he was a hunchback. His height was 5’4” and his weight fluctuated, with his health, from 95 and 120 pounds. Homer Lea was sickly all his short life.

Enrolling in Stanford in 1897, Lea planned to study law. That didn’t last long. Suddenly transformed by dreams of mili-

But this was a minority view — and this is the real mystery of Homer Lea: most people saw him as he wanted to be seen and simply suspended disbelief when his boasts seemed to border on the psychotic. When other Stanford contemporaries looked at Lea, they saw a dashing figure with a sense of humor, brilliant and charming. They were hypnotized by his piercing blue eyes and when Lea told them he was a military genius they listened — and believed.

Among the true believers were two Chinese students, Allen Chung and Lou Hoy, who were enthusiastically combining scholarship with conspiracy. It was they who offered Lea a ready-made opportunity for war and for glory: the overthrow of China’s murderous old Empress Tsu-Hsi. They introduced him to San Francisco’s Chinatown and to its most powerful secret society, the Po Wung Wu, dedicated to the overthrow of the Empress.

Now it just doesn’t happen that a Chinese secret society or tong will clasp a *bok goy* (white devil) to its bosom. But it did. Within months, Homer Lea was in the tong’s inner sanctum and virtually running the place. Journalists of the time later speculated that the Chinese really believed Lea to be a military expert and that his deformity turned them on because they considered hunchbacks good luck. Not true. Lea’s Chinese associates knew perfectly well that he was just a college student — and Chinese traditionally despise physical defects. Like so much of Lea’s life, there’s just no accounting for it.

Lea next won over the Chinese Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco and a well-financed group called the China Reform Society. Now armed with

the staple of war — money — Lea proposed to his admirers that they send him to China to stir up some action. He sailed for Canton in June 1899 — but not before making a public speech in which he trumpeted, “I go to topple the Manchus from the ancient Dragon Throne,” and then held a press conference in which he described his “secret mission.” That was pure Homer Lea.

### “I go to topple the Manchus from the Dragon Throne.”

Lea contacted Po Wung agents in Hong Kong, then went on to Peking where he met a man with whom he was to have an uneasy association for the next 10 years: the official prime minister of China, Kang Yu-wei. Kang and his status rate an explanation. He was prime minister to the captive boy emperor, Kwang Hsu; neither of them had real power. Kang, however, was dynamic and ambitious, pushing as far and as fast as he could for Western-type reforms in China. The prime minister knew that a collision between him and the dowager empress was inevitable.

According to Lea, Kang asked him why he had come.

“I have come to help you save China from the Old Tigress,” said Lea with his usual modesty, “and to rescue the boy emperor and lead your armies to victory.”

Kang blinked. “You are very young to do all that.”

“I am the same age Napoleon was at Tivoli,” replied Lea.

Kang was underwhelmed. Nevertheless, he needed all the help he could get. The Old Tigress had already begun chopping up his personal aides into chow mein and he had a pretty good idea who was next on the menu. Kang commissioned him a “colonel in the army of the emperor,” then sent him to take command of a division in remote Shansi Province.

Exactly what happened next has not been made clear. It seems Homer Lea made his way to Shansi and took command of a military unit loyal to Kang — whereupon he and his command were declared outlaws by the dowager empress. Kang fled Peking just a step ahead of the Imperial beheading blade. Almost simultaneously, the Boxer Rebellion exploded and North China became bloody chaos. Later, Lea was to boast of leading an army against Peking, of failed attempts to kidnap the dowager, and other hairy adventures.

### “Col. Lea is one of the most brilliant military geniuses now alive.”

At any rate, Lea next turned up in Hong Kong, minus his alleged army, where he rejoined Kang. It was here he was to meet a second Chinese who was to

play a key role: Sun Yat-sen, later to become immortalized as “China’s George Washington,” “The Father of Modern China,” and the like. An exile, Sun had rushed to Hong Kong because he had somehow gotten the idea that an army awaited to install him in power. No army. His imaginary army was fairly typical of Sun; he was a rather foggy type. However, Sun Yat-sen headed a small but growing faction in the Chinese exile movement, a group dedicated to the complete abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic. In his autobiography, *My Reminiscences*, published in 1912, Sun described the Hong Kong meeting:

“I was speaking to a company of my fellows when my eye fell on a man of slight physique. His face was pale. Afterward he came to me and said, ‘I would like to throw in my lot with you.’ He held out his hand. I took it and thanked him, wondering who he was. I thought he was a missionary student. After he had gone I asked, ‘Who was that little hunchback?’ ‘That,’ said the man who brought him, ‘is Colonel Homer Lea, one of the most brilliant, perhaps the most brilliant, military genius now alive. He is a perfect master of modern warfare.’ I almost gasped in astonishment. And he offered to throw in his lot with me? The next morning I called on Homer Lea. I told him in case I should succeed and my countrymen gave me the power to do so I would make him my chief military advisor.

“Do not wait until you are president. You may want me before then.”

This was the beginning of a complex three-way relationship among Sun, Kang and Lea. Sun was awed by Lea. Kang was not; he could never quite decide whether Lea was crazy or a genius or both. The republican Sun loathed the monarchist Kang, and vice versa. And Lea, as the Hong Kong meeting indicated, was keeping his options open in selecting his front man for the Chinese revolution.

### Starting a revolution takes a lot of money.

At that time, it was Kang who was obviously top honcho. Japanese agents were in touch with him and arranged for Kang and Lea to go to Japan. Homer Lea then returned to the States to raise an exile army.

One of the first things you learn about starting a revolution is that it takes money, lots of money, and Homer was a fast learner. As soon as he got back to California, he began to transform the Po Wong Wu society into a veritable money machine. One of his first major contributors was a rich Chinese improbably named Ben Young of Fresno, publisher of a string of Chinese-language newspapers. Young’s contacts in the clandestine world of Chinese tongs spanned the continent. So did Lea and his lieutenants, ex-



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1st Sergeant O'Bannion helped Homer Lea organize first unit of Chinese Imperial Reform Army in Los Angeles Chinatown.

students Allen Hung and Lou Hoy. They visited every Chinatown in the country. New branches of the tong opened in Canada and Mexico. The Po Wung Wu became the most powerful tong outside China, with branches from Honolulu to Boston and beyond.

Money poured in on a steady, systematic basis. Tong dues were as low as 50 cents a month for coolie types and ranged upward to as much as the traffic would bear for the many wealthy Chinese merchants. There was little overt coercion; however, there were squads of enforcers armed with hatchets who occasionally did their thing and were also useful in amputations performed on rival tong members.

His support base secured, Lea promoted himself to lieutenant general in the "Chinese Imperial Reform Army" and began to look around for some troops to command. He started with some high-level American contacts. Like the Marines, he was looking for a few good men.

On 18 June 1902, a tough cavalry sergeant named Ansel O'Bannion was discharged from the U.S. Army at Fort Riley, Kansas. As he was leaving, O'Ban-

nion was given a letter by his former C.O., Col. C.C. Carr of the U.S. Cavalry. The letter read:

Lieutenant General Homer Lea,  
South Bonny Brae Street,  
Los Angeles, California.

The bearer of this letter is A.E. O'Bannion, former 1st Sergeant of Troop A, 4th United States Cavalry, of whom I have previously written you. Without question he has all the qualifications you mentioned in your letter to the Auditor of the War Department.

Yours respectfully,  
Adna R. Chaffee  
Maj. Gen., U.S. Army

Chaffee had been commander of American units in the Peking relief expedition during the Boxer Rebellion. It was there that the general had run into Homer Lea and had become an instant convert. Chaffee later rose to become Army chief of staff, but he never got over his awed adulation of little Homer Lea.

**"He looked more like a poet than a soldier."**

O'Bannion went to see Lea. They met at the Angelus Hotel in Los Angeles. For the occasion, Lea wore the resplendent azure uniform of a lieutenant general in

the non-existent Imperial Reform Army, complete with a mighty saber strapped to his side. O'Bannion was not initially impressed:

"He didn't look much like a general. A slight, slender, almost frail-looking youngster, he had keen, piercing eyes and the sensitive pale face of a scholar. He had more the appearance of a poet than a soldier."

Lea went into an eloquent spiel. There had been two revolutions unique in world history, the American and the French, and now he, Homer Lea, had been called upon to lead the third great revolution, that of China...O'Bannion sat and listened and was never the same again. He became Lea's chief of staff.

In June, 1903, Lea and O'Bannion organized the first unit of the Chinese Imperial Reform Army — a 40-man contingent from the Los Angeles Chinatown. O'Bannion started an immediate training program. Volunteers were totally untrained and O'Bannion was the sole instructor — but it was a beginning. What was needed next was to recruit a corps of mercenaries, Americans, who would serve as cadres in the Chinese revolution.

O'Bannion wrote former Sgt. Lawrence

Meece, late of the U.S. Cavalry and comfortably retired in Hutchinson, Kansas. Would Meece be interested in getting back into harness, unofficially, as a military instructor? No, Meece wasn't interested, but he knew some guys who might be. He sent O'Bannion a list of names and addresses of other former cavalrymen. So did the always helpful General Chaffee.

It was also Chaffee who helped Lea found what became the "Pentagon" of the Chinese revolution: "The Western Military Academy" of Los Angeles. It was located at 114 Marchessault Street, in Chinatown.

**The five-member board of directors weren't dupes — they knew exactly what they were doing.**

The Western Military Academy was

legally chartered and its facade included an absolutely impeccable five-member board of directors. They were General Chaffee; Gen. Harrison Otis, former Governor General of the Philippines and founder and owner of the *Los Angeles Times*; Maj. Gen. J.P. Story, U.S. Army; Homer Lea, true believer; Capt. D.P. Quillin; and Elihu Root, Secretary of State of the United States. Secretary of State? That's right.

None of the above were dupes. They knew exactly what they were doing — participating in what became a massive conspiracy to overthrow the government of a friendly foreign power. Other prominent and powerful Americans were to get aboard the Homer Lea revolutionary bandwagon.

On a less exalted level, mercenaries across the country also began to sign on and organize training units of local Chinese. There was John Collins in San

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Dr. Sun Yat Sen (1866-1925), Internationally known Chinese revolutionary, writer. Off-again, on-again leader.

Photo Credit: UPI

Francisco. He helped recruit a company there only four months after the first Los Angeles unit was formed. A branch of the Western Military Academy, it was headquartered in Chinatown. In Sacramento, a professional soldier, Pete McDonald — formerly of the U.S. Army in the Philippine campaigns and the British army in the Boer War — began training a contingent. There was Jim Bradley in New York who was training his boys in a barge tied up off Canal Street. Army 20-year-man Joe Miller began violating the U.S. neutrality laws in Spokane, as was Boxer Rebellion veteran Jim Healey in nearby Seattle.

By June, 1904, units of the "Chinese Imperial Reform Army" were training in a score of cities, including Chicago, St. Louis, Boston, Denver, Portland, Oregon; Fresno, Hanford, Phoenix, Santa Barbara, Bakersfield, San Bernardino, Honolulu. The American instructors, all former U.S. Army NCOs and officers, were made captains in Lea's army. They were also initiated into Po Wung Wu. Pay was \$150 a month plus liberal expenses, fantastic for those days.

By June, 1905, Lea had 2,100 Chinese under training throughout the United States and it began to be rumored that something very peculiar was going on in America's Chinatowns. The Peking government protested to Washington and demanded an investigation. The Secret Service became interested. So did the press.

**"Chinamen in the U.S. are involved in a world-wide conspiracy."**

That same month, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* broke the story that was the beginning of a flood of publicity that was to make Homer Lea a national and international figure:

"United States Secret Service operatives have discovered evidence that a large proportion of Chinamen in this country are involved in a world-wide conspiracy to overthrow the present dynasty. In Philadelphia, the revolutionary party has headquarters in the heart of Chinatown. In a house on Race Street, which is being watched day and night by Secret Service men, a body of Chinamen is being drilled daily..."

A conventional conspirator would have been horrified by the publicity. Not our Homer Lea. He gloried in it. One of his most bizarre capers in pursuit of the printed page was the time Lea actually arranged for his "secret" army to march in Pasadena's annual Tournament of Roses parade. March they did, armed and illegal as hell. Jack London, foreign correspondent and author, shook up L.A. natives when he wrote in the *Los Angeles Examiner* that Lea's boys were really

Japanese troops. Lea resented that. However, he did note that London wrote they "made a fine showing in their bright uniforms and in their marching order with their Krags and dagger bayonets."

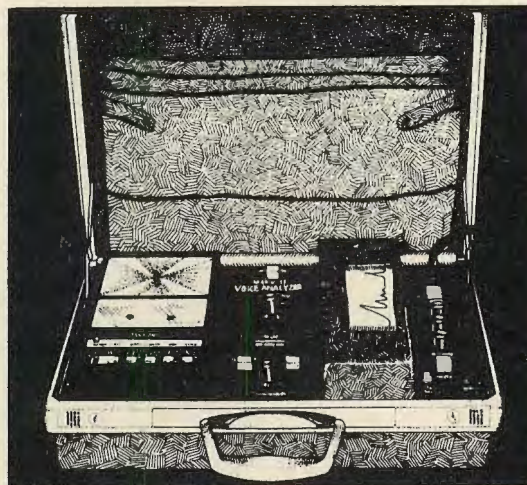
Publicity also reached Lea's supposed "commander in chief," former Prime Minister Kang who had been fluttering ineffectually in exile around the Far East for several years and had been virtually ignoring his "lieutenant general." Like a shot, Kang headed for Lea's Los Angeles headquarters and demanded a piece of the ac-

tion. He got it. Lea's organization received him with full honors and laid on a lavish banquet in Chinatown that was also attended by the Homer Lea fan club of American biggies. More importantly, from Kang's point of view, Lea presented him with a war chest of \$400,000 — an enormous sum in those days. Kang took the money, which quickly disappeared into his personal funds. Nothing was said, but relations between Kang and his hosts cooled.

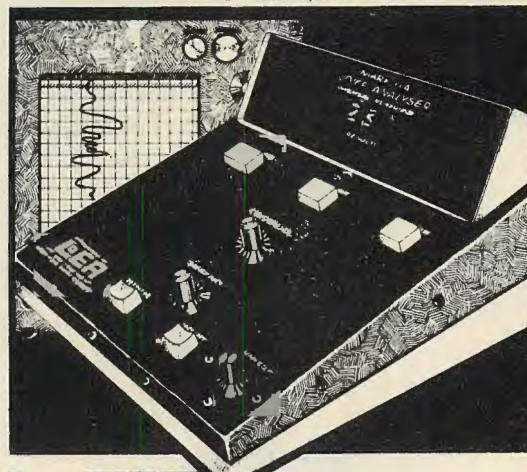
*(To be concluded in the next issue.)*



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The name itself came from that fact that one of the house specialties was a collection of young boys, on hand to please elderly Chinese Mandarins or other men of wealth who went for that sort of thing. One section of a wall was adorned with closeup photos of each available asshole and the elderly Chinese gentlemen used to drool with anticipation as they perused the delights that awaited them upstairs. Reliable sources say there were not actually 1,000 of these available, but that's nitpicking because there was an adequate supply for all and for any taste.

And that included the liberated woman. There was a clutch of virile young men on hand for the Dragon Lady types, of which there was no small amount in Shanghai back in the good old days.

Marines had a particular affinity for the place simply because there were a lot of them stationed in and around Shanghai at the time. A retired Marine gunny sergeant was manager of the house for many years.

And legend has it that when the Fourth Marine Regiment was preparing to destroy its colors so they could not be captured just before the Japs overwhelmed all American forces in the Philippines, one old triple hashmarked private turned to another and said, "This has been a hell of a lot of fun, but I'd just as soon be back in Shanghai at the House of a Thousand Assholes."  
—Bob Poos



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# ARMOR IN THE WIRE!

MACV VACILLATES DURING LANG VEI SLAUGHTER

by Capt. John Early

**C**APTAIN Frank Willoughby, a stoop-shouldered, likable infantry officer, worriedly scanned an acetate-covered map on the wall of his tactical operations center (TOC). His isolated Special Forces camp of Lang Vei, South Vietnam, was being shelled daily and intelligence reports indicated more trouble in store for the defenders. Rocket, recoilless rifle shells and mortar rounds continued to pound the camp. The North Vietnamese Army (NVA) had installed 152mm guns on towering Co Roc, some five kilometers away, and they began registering on the outpost to add to the daily shelling. Often the mortar tubes were close enough to the perimeter for the Americans inside to hear the rounds as they hit the bottom of the tube. As night closed in on the camp on 6 February 1968, its occupants checked weapons and waited for the enemy. They would not wait long.

Lang Vei was one of 10 Special Forces "A" camps used for Civilian Irregular Defense Group (CIDG) operations mounted by Company C, 5th Special Forces Group. The theory behind the CIDG program called for SF teams to recruit and train local villagers and their Vietnamese Special Forces counterparts, and then advise them on conducting combat operations against VC and NVA units operating in local areas.

The program was riddled with corrupt, self-serving officers from the start. The Vietnamese Special Forces, with few exceptions, was little more than a palace guard and American advisors were hard pressed to mount offensive operations while combating the sloth and corruption in the ranks of the people they were supposed to be helping.

The Americans were not without blame either. Poorly defined directives from Saigon, careerism in the officer corps and hostility toward Special Forces from the conventional army made the CIDG program a bad bet from the first. However, young officers and older, wiser NCOs tried to make do with the facilities and men at their disposal. It was an uphill fight in an uphill war.

Lang Vei was responsible for surveillance of the border area and the DMZ. The camp, located 1½ kilometers from Laos and 35 kilometers from the DMZ,

sat squarely across Highway 9, just eight kilometers from the 9,000-man Marine garrison at Khe Sanh. The Marines also suffered daily barrages of rockets and mortars as they held on to Khe Sanh's trenches and bunkers.

The Lang Vei camp had been moved from Khe Sanh after the Marines moved artillery batteries into the old air strip. The new camp was actually the second camp named Lang Vei to be installed in the area. The first site was deemed unsuitable after its defenses were breached during an attack in May of 1967. The new Lang Vei was moved about 1,000 meters west. With the aid of Navy construction battalions, bunkers of reinforced concrete were installed, making it a showpiece camp specifically built to withstand siege. It was finished and ready for occupancy in September of that year, when Detachment A-101 moved in and set up house.

Willoughby was responsible for an area of nearly 250 square kilometers around the camp. He had four under-strength CIDG companies of Bru Montagnard tribesmen and local Vietnamese. The Americans were assisted by a detachment of Vietnamese Special Forces (LLDB) in their task of keeping tabs on NVA units in the area. All total, over 480 soldiers manned the trenches at Lang Vei. Within two days, almost all would be dead or prisoners of war.

## Lang Vei was a showpiece camp, built to withstand siege.

CIDG patrols fanned out from the camp soon after completion of the fortifications. From September to December, pressure from NVA 324B Division mounted on the small hilltop garrison. Patrols encountered heavier resistance as they attempted to keep the NVA at bay. By December, enemy activity was so great that CIDG units refused to patrol outside. Willoughby called headquarters in Da nang and asked for help.

Danang was also feeling the pressure throughout I Corps. The Mobile Strike Force — or Mike Force — was spread over the entire corps on operations assisting the nine other "A" camps. C Company dispatched the remains of a classified project, the Mobile Guerrilla

Force (MGF), to help Willoughby's team.

The MGF was originally formed to operate behind NVA lines, conducting harassing ops against the enemy's lines of communication in order to tie up enemy units destined for duty in South Vietnam. The project had been successful despite heavy casualties. MGF veterans were some of the best indigenous troops in the corps area. These tough Hre Montagnards, airborne trained and battle tested, were led by equally competent SF NCOs, many on their second and third tours in Vietnam.

The MGF traveled heavily armed, with M-16s as the main battle weapons, augmented by eight M-60 machine guns and 16 M-79 grenade launchers per platoon. In addition, each platoon carried an experimental short-barreled 60mm mortar. The MGF was lifted into Lang Vei in January, loaded for bear and ready to fight.

Shortly after arriving, they began to push their patrols into Laos under elaborate ruses devised by two of the platoon leaders, Sgts. Harvey Brande and John Early. Technically, they were not allowed to violate the Laotian border, unless in "hot pursuit." Brande and Early moved their troops out of Lang Vei under the cover of early morning darkness. At first light, they called Willoughby, telling him they were in pursuit of a platoon of NVA infantry at the Se Pone River. Blasting off a few magazines for effect while talking on the radio, they crossed the river to harass the NVA sanctuary.

## "You guys are just trying to make yourselves look good. The NVA haven't got tanks!"

In January, the MGF located an empty tank park a few kilometers across the river, which contained fresh impressions of tracked vehicles. During the search, Early's men were ambushed by an NVA company. For the next few hours, he and Brande fought a slow, bitter retreat toward the camp gates. Reports sent to Khe Sanh and Saigon were dismissed by the brass as exaggerated or false.

As one Marine officer said, "You guys are just trying to make yourselves look good. The NVA haven't got tanks!"



A few days later, small enemy probes began to test camp defenses as NVA artillery increased its daily pressure. Snipers shot at anything that moved, making it a major operation to move above ground during daylight. MGF patrols began to make daily contact.

Suddenly, from the morning mists on 24 January, soldiers of the 33rd Royal Laotian Battalion appeared, seeking asylum from the NVA. Nearly 2,500 soldiers and dependents straggled into camp during the day. Their camp, Ban Pho, 12 kilometers from Lang Vei just inside Laos, had been attacked and overrun by NVA infantry and armor. Upon questioning, it was learned their casualties were extremely light for a unit that had been overrun. In fact, they fled their positions without fighting at the first sight of the enemy. This information went out to Saigon and again the reply came: "The NVA have no armor in this area." Because headquarters refused to heed his reports, Willoughby, fearing the worst, sealed the camp to all but combatants and made ready for the fight he knew must come soon.

Tension inside the camp was unbearable. Even taking a crap now required considerable cunning and large amounts of luck to avoid snipers' bullets or falling mortar rounds. Most Americans lived, sweated and waited in the same clothes for days. In order not to be caught off guard, no one took off his boots at night, and everyone changed sleeping positions nightly, lest CIDG loyalties change overnight, an ever-present danger in any SF camp.

On 25 January, a small medic team, under the command of SFC Eugene Ashley, a black medic, landed at Lang Vei to care for the Laos' medical needs and interrogate their leaders. They moved into the old Lang Vei site, about 1,000 meters from the camp, and with orders to remain inside the Lao perimeter, began to minister to the Laotians.

CIDG companies were armed with M-1 rifles and M-2 carbines, Browning automatic rifles (BARs), .30-caliber machine guns, as well as claymores, grenades and shotguns for "trench cleaning." There was over ¾ of a million rounds of ammunition on hand. They would need every round of it.

### **Marine commanders vowed they would offer assistance.**

Supporting the camp, Marine artillery batteries of 105mm, 155mm and eight-inch howitzers waited on call at Khe Sanh. Using the call-sign "Intrigue," they were ready to fire 24 hours a day. Besides the artillery, two Marine rifle companies could be dispatched from Khe Sanh and Mike Force companies from Danang flown into the camp. Marine commanders still remembered the SF camp at A Shau which had asked for Marine help as it was being wiped out in 1965. No assistance had come and the defenders were forced to evade capture for weeks in the jungle. The Marines would not fail again, they pledged.

Willoughby also had on call AC-47 gunships for night attacks and F-4 Phantoms and Army gunships for close support. In the final hours all these assets would be needed.

The Lang Vei American personnel rechecked weapons and ammo stockpiles and tried to encourage the CIDG as they waited for the crack 324B Division commanders to decide their fate. They didn't have long to wait.

At 2200 hours on 6 February 1968, the MGF bunkers in the 104 Company area were cold. Sergeant Early had just finished his hourly check of listening posts (LPs) and sat shivering against the mountain chill. His command post (CP) consisted of an eight-by-eight-foot hole, filled with boxes of extra ammo. A stretcher lay nearby for sleeping. The MGF platoon leaders were with their troops in fighting

positions and maintaining 50 percent alert at night.

At 2400 hours, Sergeant Brande, holding the left flank in the 101 Company area, would relieve him. Brande was on his third tour in the mountains of I Corps. The thick, jungle-covered mountains and valleys around Lang Vei were nothing new for him. Brande had been at A Shau — the similarity of the two camps was not lost on him.

Everyone was jumpy. Fog makes the LPs nervous. The shelling was particularly heavy and trip flares went off with unnerving regularity. The CIDG in 102 Company area was blasting away sporadically all night. SFC Charlie Lindewald, manning an OP with his 40-man platoon 800 meters west of the camp, bitched on the radio about outgoing rounds sailing over his position.

Lindewald was a legend in the Lang Vei camp, as well as the rest of I Corps. A hard drinker, he enlisted the aid of an old Montagnard woman to keep his beer supply stocked. The old woman carried Ba Mui Ba beer through NVA lines from Khe Sanh village for 300 piastres a bottle each day. Although hot and tasting like hell, it was beer! Lindewald reported movement around his location and called for mortar illumination.

At 2230 one of Early's squad leaders spotted people in front of his position, alerting him to sappers working in the wire. Two Montagnard soldiers were dispatched with bayonets to bring them in quietly for a little chat. Early called Willoughby, alerting him to the activity. As he replaced the telephone handset, a grenade exploded near the edge of his hole and a trip flare bathed the perimeter in whitish light. In the glow, he saw large numbers of enemy rising from the

**Demolished Soviet-built PT-76 tank. At Lang Vei on 6 Feb. 1968, Sgt. Early radioed, "I've got five tanks and a couple hundred gooks on top of me. They're all over the fucking place!"**



ground, so many in the initial rush that they seemed to be standing shoulder-to-shoulder.

The perimeter erupted in gunfire as satchel charges exploded, breaching the wire and clearing paths for the NVA assault. Machine guns rattled and grenades blasted in Brande's position as the enemy assault began to close on the 101 Company area. Almost at once, they were on top of the Montagnards, who began to struggle hand-to-hand in the trenches. The flank of 104 Company came under fire.

### **"We got tanks in the wire!"**

In the meantime, Sergeant Nick Fragos, one of the camp medics, in the observation tower atop the TOC, could not believe his eyes. At the edge of the light in 104's area, he saw two green, dust-covered PT-76 light amphibious tanks, from the cupolas of which commanders were observing sappers probing for anti-tank mines.

Fragos grabbed the field phone, screaming, "We got tanks in the wire!" and then scrambled down the ladder to brief the camp commander.

Early could barely hear Willoughby's call for confirmation of Fragos' sighting through the crack and blast of M-16s and AK-47s at close range. The tanks began to rumble toward his position. In the dust and smoke, he saw five PT-76s and perhaps a company of infantry moving up the road behind them.

He shouted, "Jesus Christ, I've got five tanks and a couple hundred gooks on top of me. They're all over the fucking place. Get me some illumination!" He dashed off to his right flank to help organize resistance at the Lang Troai road.

At 2300 hours, for the first time in the Vietnam war, NVA armor attacked a Special Forces camp.

On 27 January, automatic weapons fire near the Lao encampment disturbed the early morning. Brande and Early responded with two platoons, finding a young medical specialist and a small squad of Laotians had been ambushed while investigating a suspected NVA mortar position. The medic was missing, along with a PRC-25 radio and the signal instructions for American frequencies. Brande interrogated the Lao and called in his report. Early searched the area for the missing soldier. Although the Lao claimed to have put up a fierce fight, no spent rounds were found at the ambush site. A camouflage hat and six blood-stained M-16 magazines were the only clues to the young soldier's fate. He was never seen again.

On 30 January, a bedraggled NVA deserter appeared at the camp's west gate. There, relieved of his weapons and valuables by the CIDG, he was directed, without escort, to the team house where the Americans were eating lunch. His arrival at the door caused near havoc. Under

careful interrogation, he revealed he had been a member of a reconnaissance platoon responsible for scouting the camp. His battalion was resting across the river and tanks were positioned nearby. He claimed a stone causeway was being built, at night, under the water's surface for the tanks to cross. This information was relayed to higher headquarters but no comment was received. Willoughby could not send the NVA soldier to Danang for confirmation, due to suspension of air traffic into Lang Vei.

Although camp strength was considerably lower than normal, and Hre MGF company, the only reliable unit, was nearly exhausted from daily contacts and patrolling, Willoughby believed his position defensible. The camp was well sited for the most effective use of fields of fire. Bunkers and trench lines of reinforced concrete and steel had been constructed by Navy CBs. An underground emergency medical bunker was well stocked and staffed and the camp had a wide variety of weapons on hand.

Camp emplacements sported two 106mm recoilless rifles, two 4.2-inch mortars, and six 81mm mortars in the inner perimeter. Four 57mm recoilless rifles were placed in each of four company positions. In addition, crates of M-72 light anti-tank weapons (LAWs) were placed around the camp.

### **The NVA deserter revealed that tanks were waiting across the river.**

Many claymore mines and trip flares ringed the perimeter, in addition to the usual concertina wire. Due to a MACV directive, no anti-tank mines were allowed in camp minefields. Concrete sleeping bunkers with interlocking fires were located in strategic positions manned by American advisors and the wire ring around the camp was covered by .30 caliber machine guns. All emplacements were heavily sandbagged and mutually supporting.

Willoughby immediately ordered SP4 Frank Dooks, camp radio operator, to establish a link with Danang and Khe Sanh. Dooks, in the Army for his second enlistment, after having served with the Central Intelligence Agency, had found Agency work boring and returned to the more vigorous life of the combat soldier. He wasn't bored anymore. Because Khe Sanh was skeptical about the tanks, he called for artillery from Intrigue:

### **"We are taking heavy ground attack and have armor in the wire!"**

"Intrigue, Intrigue, this is Brassy Study, over! We are taking a heavy ground attack and have armor in the wire. Stand by for fire mission, over."

"Brassy, this is Intrigue. Are you sure about that armor?"

"Roger, roger, that is affirm. We have tanks in the perimeter."

"Can you see them from your location?"

Dooks nearly screamed into the handset with frustration. "Affirmative, affirmative. I can hear the engines backfiring. They're firing into the bunkers."

The Marine operator still seemed unable to comprehend the situation. After a moment of silence, he replied, "Negative, Brassy. That must be the sound of your generators backfiring."

Before Dooks could answer, a cannon shell blasted in the TOC door, showering him with dirt and smoke. Dooks calmly retrieved the handset from the floor, saying, "Intrigue, be advised, one of our generators just blew down the bunker door!" He then began to call for help from Danang.

Meanwhile, Fragos was briefing Lt. Col. Dan Schungel, C Company commander, at camp for a courtesy visit with the Laotian battalion commander, also a lieutenant colonel. Schungel hoped to receive first-hand information concerning the alleged tanks. They scrambled upstairs

SF lieutenant checks 106mm recoilless rifle following Ben Het mortar and rocket attack. After NV camp was reduced to rubble.



to organize tank hunter-killer teams.

Meanwhile, Willoughby ordered pre-planned artillery fires from Khe Sanh and called for a "Spooky" AC-47 flareship to place the camp under illumination.

By now, Brande's position had been stormed. The defenders of the 101 Company area fired their final protective fires and began to pull back under brutal pounding of the enemy tanks. Brande was seriously wounded and without his leadership, the MGF began to leave their positions. As Brande lapsed into unconsciousness, his captors carried him away to suffer at NVA hands for the next five years and war's end.

Early was counting on MGF firepower on the left and by now his situation was desperate. The main thrust was coming in over his position and his Montagnards were badly outgunned, beginning to waver, but they exhibited incredible courage and refused to abandon their holes, although without training in tank fighting. In fact, these Hre tribesmen had never seen tanks before. Out-gunned, out-flanked, wounded and trying to survive hand-to-hand combat, they began to fall back to the camp's top under the surreal glare of tank searchlights, forced to leave nearly half their comrades dead and wounded in the 104 Company area.

### Early's Montagnards began to fall back to the top of the camp.

However, they had bought valuable time for the rest of the camp. In the 30 minutes it took the tanks to breach the wire in front of their trenches, Willoughby was able to organize his support for holding the camp.

By 0100, 7 February, MGF remnants on the east side of camp consolidated their positions near the 81mm mortar pit on the east side of the TOC.

After the first few seconds of disbelief, American advisors leaped into action to meet the enemy onslaught. SFC James

tank assault on Lang Vei in February 1968,



NOVEMBER/79

Holt, on the camp's south side in the 2nd CRP area, brought fire to bear from his 106mm recoilless rifle, his first shot scoring a direct hit on the lead tank on the Lang Troai road. He reloaded quickly and repeated the performance on the second tank. The CIDG helped him reload with canister rounds to blast the crew off the immobilized hulls. Still the tanks churned up the road, pressing their attack.

The rest of the camp was equally hard-pressed. Tanks were sighted to the north-east and west as well. By now all inner perimeter positions were under American command. Sgts. Pete Tiroch, team intelligence NCO, and Dennis Thompson, A-104's weapons NCO, fired the 4.2-inch mortar into locations already overrun.

Dooms and SFC Earl Burke helped as the 2nd CRP area was inundated with enemy. Firing at charge zero and maximum elevation, they kept the area well lighted, attempting to stop the infantry behind the tanks.

Holt, a brave and resolute man, continued his one-man fight by holing a PT-76 at point-blank range. He fired until his ammo was depleted and then abandoned his trench as enemy infantry swarmed over the parapet never to be seen alive again.

A fourth PT-76 lumbered up the road and clanked off into the destroyed 104 Company area, looking for survivors.

Early in the attack, Willoughby tried to get artillery support from Khe Sanh, but the Marine garrison was also under siege, and a delay occurred. Now artillery began to pound the outer edges of the camp with a vengeance. Early relayed corrections from the 81 pit to the TOC, which passed it to Khe Sanh. Shortly after 0100, artillery was joined by an Air Force forward air controller (FAC), directing strikes against enemy concentrations by F-4 and A1-E Skyraiders.

### By 0130, the outer perimeter and eastern side of the camp caved in.

Despite massive ordnance and the courage of its defenders, the outer perimeter soon came under NVA control. By 0130, the eastern side of the camp caved in. Survivors reported seeing NVA soldiers in attack formations with bandages freshly applied. The enemy, although taking heavy casualties, was determined to have Lang Vei at any price, sending their wounded back into the slaughter.

After three tanks crushed the defense in the areas of 102 and 103 Company, that side of the camp appeared doomed. In short order, as tanks exterminated CIDG soldiers at point-blank range, survivors of these two companies attempted to fall back along the edge of Highway 9 to Khe Sanh. They never made it through the impenetrable NVA ring around the camp.

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Lindewald, meanwhile, was trying to break out and return to camp, but while directing artillery around his small position, he was seriously wounded. SFC Kenneth Hannah, the detachment's heavy weapons leader, took over the platoon.

### **"Lindewald's hit in the gut. We're being overrun!"**

A few minutes after 0200 the radio in Willoughby's TOC crackled, "Charlie's been hit in the gut. He's pretty bad. We're being overrun." The radio fell silent. Both men were killed as their trenchworks were captured.

As the camp perimeter slowly contracted, defenders formed small hunter-killer teams to engage the tanks. Schungel, Fragos and the camp XO, 1st Lt. Miles Wilson, using plastic LAWs, engaged the tanks in the 104 Company area. Fragos suffered a misfire on one weapon and the second round fell short of its mark. During the night, several other teams experienced failure to fire or had ineffective hits against the PT-76s' light armor.

Early and 1st Lt. Paul Longrear, a Georgia Tech football star, finally gave up trying to repair the LAWs and resorted to hand grenades. As other hunter-killer teams attempted to repair their LAWs, they were showered with small arms fire and tank machine guns.

One tank began to climb the hill to the TOC, and Willoughby called for variable-timed fuzed artillery on the camp itself. Teams began to scurry for any overhead cover.

Artillery efforts were hampered by an NVA radio operator, who spoke perfect English to confuse the Marine artillerymen. Eloquent swearing convinced the Marines of the true identity of the voice directing the shellfire.

As Longrear and Early tried to find more anti-tank weapons, Early stumbled across SP4 James Moreland, the MGF medic, who was moving around camp, treating any wounded he could find. Throughout the attack, he moved from one wounded man to another, completely unarmed and unmolested for nearly four hours. As Early began to climb the TOC tower for a better shot at an approaching tank, a cannon shell ripped into it, wounding him in the head and shoulders and Moreland severely in the head and chest.

After dragging the unconscious medic to the TOC for treatment, Early returned to the safety of his mortar pit. Longrear had found another LAW container, so they tried tank busting again. Both anti-tank rounds were duds.

Longrear, a man not given to long speeches, shrugged, looked at Early and said, "Can't do any good sitting here. You go to the right and I'll go left. Get up on the back and dump it down the hatch." With that he grabbed a white

phosphorus grenade and jumped from the pit, heading for the tank 40 meters away.

Crossing directly in front of the vehicle to draw fire away from Early, he circled the green hulk. The crew, unaware of Early's rear approach, concentrated their fire on the young officer. As the two men reached the back of the tank, they climbed onto the deck vents. Forcing the hatch open, they dropped the WP grenades inside and bailed out. On the other side of the tank a lone NVA soldier, trying to find some shelter from the firing, opened fire on them, hitting Early in the legs at point-blank range.

When Early regained consciousness, the lieutenant was carrying him back to the TOC for treatment. Longrear returned to the MGF survivors as Fragos treated arriving wounded in the underground operations center bunker serving as a makeshift hospital. Nearly everyone inside was wounded.

The entire camp was covered by thick, oily smoke as fuel storage dumps, supply bunkers and ammo dumps burned and exploded. Everywhere the enemy swarmed over fortifications, hand-to-hand combat being the order of the day. And everywhere men encountered misfires from the LAWs. In the confusion, most defenders tried to meet the tanks head-on instead of from the side or rear. Vietnamese, Montagnards and Americans fired rifle grenades, machine guns, LAWs and finally in desperation, climbed onto tank hulls, trying to pry open hatches or firing into observation slits. Still the steel hulks clanked forward until, at 0300, they ground their way onto the top of the TOC, the NVA controlling all of the camp except the command bunker and its occupants. It would prove a tough nut to crack.

As the battle at Lang Vei raged, Sgt. Ashley and his two medics, Sgt. Richard Allen and SP4 Joel Johnson, watched helplessly from the Lao camp at old Lang Vei. The Laotian commander was instructed by NVA messengers to stay put and not become involved in the fight. He obeyed orders, his men firing no support missions for the Vietnamese and Americans a thousand meters away.

Tanks and troops ran amuck inside the camp, blasting bunker doors point-blank. One PT-76 rumbled to the medical bunker door and systematically reduced it to rubble, along with its wounded population. Tanks and infantry converged on the TOC as mop-up operations continued.

In the interim, Schungel and Wilkens returned to the TOC, having engaged in a duel with tanks on the west end of the camp, only to find the bunker door blasted to rubble. The colonel called into the bunker but the occupants, believing him a captive, did not answer. The TOC was now manned by Willoughby, Fragos, Early, Longrear, Moreland, Dooms and Sgts. Emanuel Phillips and David Brooks, along with a dozen LLDB and 25 CIDG.

In the chaos, the men in the bunker believed everyone else dead or captured. The men outside the bunker believed the same.

Wilkins, dazed from a tank shell explosion, took refuge behind a pile of sandbags at the bunker door with badly wounded SP5 William MacMurrey. Mac, camp demo man, had one hand blown off and several other wounds. Wilkins attempted to stop the blood by tying off the arm with commo wire. The two waited for Schungel's return and watched apprehensively as NVA mop-up teams moved closer.

### **The enemy tank lumbered on top of the TOC to crush the roof.**

Upon Schungel's return they placed Mac in the shelter of the blasted door and moved off to find a more defensible position for him. Before they could return, an enemy tank lumbered onto the top of the TOC to crush the roof. Mac screamed for help but as Longrear, Brooks and Fragos charged up the destroyed stairwell they were met by a hail of gunfire as the NVA squad executed the helpless man.

Above ground, CIDG survivors attempted to break out to safety or evade capture by hiding.

Other "A" team members and the MGF company clustered together in an attempt to survive the carnage. Pete Tirach, who took refuge inside the team house and messhall, discovered Team Sgt. Paul Craig, Thompson, Burke and nearly a platoon of CIDG nearby. They quickly formulated an escape plan. Making their way to the camp's north side, they were separated by heavy machine-gun fire from the supply bunker at the camp's edge. Only Tirach and "Pappy" Craig, along with a dozen CIDG, made it to the elephant grass's shelter at the edge of the camp minefield. Five years later, Dennis Thompson would emerge from captivity with Harvey Brande.

Schungel and Wilkins found safety under the floor of the gutted dispensary, listening to NVA soldiers loot the medical supplies overhead.

Inside the TOC, Willoughby ordered all lights out and everyone to remain silent. The survivors would "play dead."

NVA began to probe the stairwell, the only passage open, with gunfire, grenades and satchel charges, not anxious to assault the bunker, and contenting themselves with dropping explosives down ventilator shafts and entrance. Occasionally, a few ventured down the stairway to their death. Soon, more than a dozen green-clad bodies jammed the doorway. The others waited. They had time; the camp was theirs.

As night progressed, Willoughby continued to plead for help from the Khe Sanh Marine garrison to send the infantry companies he needed for a break-out at-

tempt. If two rifle companies created a diversion along the highway east of camp, perhaps the remaining American and Vietnamese Special Forces advisors and CIDG soldiers could break the ring of enemy infantry around the camp.

His plans fell on deaf ears. Incredibly, the Marine commanders at III MAF in Danang could not reach a decision. The young company commanders and platoon leaders at Khe Sanh were ready and eager to help their countrymen eight kilometers away. They waited for the word. It never came.

**"Americans are dying here. For Christ's sake, help us!"**

Marine radio operators listened to a whisper from wall speakers of the command bunker at Khe Sanh: "Americans are dying up here. For Christ's sake, help us."

At Special Forces headquarters in Nha Trang, volunteers from SF camps all over the country asked permission to conduct a night assault on the camp by chopper or parachute. The entire complement of personnel from Project Delta, a classified recon unit, offered to go in and bring out their friends.

At 0330, radio contact with Lang Vei began to fade and was soon lost. Only radio operators at Khe Sanh and Air Force FACs orbiting over the camp could hear the trapped men. Weakened radio batteries formed the only tenuous link with outside help.

Inside the TOC, defenders took shelter under metal camp beds as grenades and satchel charges continued to tumble down on them. Air strikes and artillery added to the din as the FAC placed strike after strike on top of the bunker, hoping to keep the NVA from mounting a final assault on its occupants.

Special Forces at Danang began to assemble a Mike Force company and a volunteer CIDG company to be lifted into the camp as soon as helicopters were available. "C" Company requested choppers for the attack at first light. III MAF and MACV argued but reached no decision. At Lang Vei, men continued to die.

As the survivors huddled inside the TOC, they heard sounds of digging between the crump of bombs and the blast of grenades — enemy digging near the south wall. A new dread came over the battered soldiers.

**"We are going to destroy the bunker. Give up and we will not harm you."**

Shortly after daylight on the morning of the 7th, the NVA began using thermite grenades in an attempt to set fire to the bunker's contents. Fires burned for nearly 30 minutes, choking the thirsty men as they tried to beat out the flames. Men

huddled near the floor for fresh air, sharing their gas masks. Others covered their mouths with battle dressings and began to vomit and choke. Tear gas grenades began tumbling down the vent shafts. A momentary panic set in at the first whiffs of gas, quickly overcome. They were too exhausted to be scared much more. Willoughby, sensing the end was near, ordered the codes and classified documents destroyed.

"We are going to destroy the bunker. Give up and we will not harm you," a voice called down in Vietnamese. The CIDG interpreter repeated the demand in English.

Stunned, scared faces turned toward the door. A couple of tired smiles appeared. Somebody softly whispered, "Fuck you!"

The VNSF commander held a hurried conference with his men and then started up the stairs, without looking at the Americans. For a few minutes all was quiet. Only eight men were left in the bunker, six of them wounded. They needed the Vietnamese firepower for a breakthrough.

Still no one talked of surrender. Another voice yelled down for the Americans to give up, a demand punctuated with a shower of grenades. They remained silent. Shortly, a volley of gunfire announced the execution of the Vietnamese. The digging resumed.

At 0700, quiet settled over the bunker as they lay shivering on the blackened concrete, cordite-burned faces cradled on torn and bandaged arms, every man resting, waiting for a final charge. Weapons were trained on the door, fingers on the triggers. Waiting.

The south wall disappeared in a thunderous explosion, a blast opening a eight-by-eight-foot hole, giving the NVA direct access to the beleaguered men. It severely injured Moreland again and knocked Fragos unconscious.

The Americans waited for the final rush. It never materialized. The enemy remained outside, throwing grenades and satchel charges through the hole, without pressing their advantage.

As the grey light of dawn parted white mountain mist, Gene Ashley watched

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from the Lao camp and came to a decision. Good men were being slaughtered nearby and he was going to stop it! Throughout the night, Ashley begged, cajoled and threatened the Lao commander to send help to his comrades. He steadfastly refused, but now he appeared to be weakening. After a heated discussion he relented and agreed to send two platoons to rescue the trapped men.

### Ashley assembled his ragtag force into a skirmish line.

Ashley did not look like a man bound for great things. Slightly overweight with gold-rimmed glasses that keep sliding down his sweating nose, he assembled his ragtag force into a skirmish line, with one American on each flank and himself in the middle. Calling Willoughby that help was at hand and requesting air to neutralize the NVA strongpoints, he trudged the 1,000 meters to new Lang Vei, beginning to find wounded CIDG who could still fight. He pressed them into his skirmish line. As they crossed the lines of the old 104 Company area, the NVA swept the Lao line with machine-gun fire. The Lao broke and ran, in complete panic.

Kicking and yelling, prodding at gunpoint, Ashley attempted to bring order to his panicked troops. The enemy crushed his attempts with mortar fire. Reluctantly, he began to fall back with his men to an area near Highway 9 to reassemble and stage the second attack. He called the men in the TOC and promised to try again. Gene Ashley would prove to be a man of his word.

Inside the bunker, enemy machine guns were heard, hammering away at Ashley's force and the aircraft supporting his venture. Willoughby, a considerably older man than he was two days ago, attempted, with the help of Dooms, to regain radio contact with Khe Sanh. Fragos tended the shattered, delirious Moreland. The occupants, overcome by smoke and gas, fought back waves of nausea and unconsciousness. Grenades continued to rain down.

By 0930, Ashley received another air strike and was trying to assemble another assault. As he formed for the attack, Tirach and Craig appeared with their CIDG and fell in with the rescue attempt. No sooner had Ashley readied his men, than 60mm and 82mm mortars began to impact in his assembly area. As the Americans urged their reluctant men through the barrage, the assault picked up momentum. Immediately, an NVA company, throwing grenades and supported by heavy machine guns, counterattacked the ragtag force.

The rescue caved in under this determined resistance and Ashley limped back to the road, once again collecting his men and preparing for another charge. As they pulled back to safe ground, Schungel and

Wilkins were picked up and dispatched to the Lao camp.

Willoughby's radio crackled, "It's no good. I'm getting a lot of fire. My left flank caved in and we're taking a lot of casualties. Hang on. We'll be back, just hang on. We'll get you out."

Ashley reorganized his forces for the third attempt. As Tirach and Johnson gave him support, Ashley forced his men to advance once more, his force reduced by half. His enemy was well dug-in. When the mortar misfired, Johnson and Tirach joined the assault force, making good progress until reaching the 3rd CRP lines, where again the attack bogged down and was repulsed. Sick and disheartened men crawled back to the road to rest.

Ashley decided more firepower was needed to crack the North Vietnamese lines. He sent Johnson back for a 57mm recoilless rifle to take out enemy bunkers and organized for another attack. Johnson began the assault by blasting the NVA bunker-line and silencing the heavy machine gun near the TOC. Elated, the Americans urged their troops uphill to the eastern 81mm mortar pit. As the attackers charged into NVA positions, Gene Ashley fell with a bullet in the chest. The enemy, seeing the leader down, increased their fire and drove the demoralized Lao and CIDG back just 50 meters short of the TOC entrance.

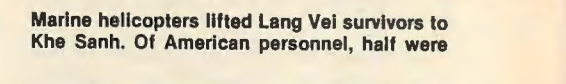
Inside hope lingered on the men's faces as the volume of fire moved closer. Almost as quickly, the faces mirrored the sad fact of defeat. They must go it alone.

Allen and Johnson dragged Ashley's body out of the line of fire and administered first aid. With CIDG help, they carried him back to Highway 9, where a jeep sent by Schungel from the Lao camp waited for him. The medics scrambled aboard and rushed him to the safety of the Lao perimeter. As the vehicle stopped near the Laotian command bunker, a mortar round impacted near it, killing Ashley and wounding Allen. Ashley's refusal to give up would win him one of 15 Medals of Honor earned by Special Forces soldiers in Vietnam.

### "My left flank caved in and we're taking a lot of casualties."

The relief controversy continued to rage in the air-conditioned comfort of Saigon and Danang operations rooms. Colonel Jonathan Ladd, commander of all Special Forces in Vietnam, was finally allowed to formulate a plan for the camp's relief at 1100 hours, eight hours having elapsed since the NVA gained control of the camp. Now the "brass" began to move.

In the Lang Vei bunker, all hopes were shattered when Frank Willoughby learned of Ashley's defeat and death. He held a last conference with his men. All were



Marine helicopters lifted Lang Vei survivors to Khe Sanh. Of American personnel, half were

wounded, weak from lack of water and food, and nearly out of ammunition. Each man carried two grenades and less than six magazines for their M-16s. One man carried only his Browning pistol, his CAR-15 a bent piece of black junk. Moreland, mortally wounded and screaming deliriously each time the medic touched him, had to be left behind until a reaction force could be organized to return to the camp. The other wounded men were unable to carry both him and the other seriously injured.

Willoughby called for air strikes, informing the FAC of his plan to break out. For the next few hours, the Air Force would pound the camp and the bunker with salvo after salvo to reduce enemy resistance. Shock waves hurled dirt and debris throughout the bunker, blinding already burned and blackened faces.

By 1600, as planes flew dummy bomb runs to keep NVA heads down, Willoughby's smoke-choked voice croaked, "OK. Let's go above ground." One by one, they filed upstairs, stumbling over stacked bodies, each man helping the others, into the sunlight.

The sound of low-flying Phantoms ripped the air. Nerves and muscles tensed for the gunfire they knew would come. Silence. The protective cover of the elephant grass at camp's edge seemed miles away. They ran for the northeast supply bunker, machine-gun fire ripping the ground in front of them. Longrear silenced the weapon with a long burst from his M-16. Supporting each other, they stumbled unmolested toward the highway.

Just outside the perimeter, a jeep slid to a halt and they piled in, on top of one other. The vehicle roared off toward the Laotian camp. The survivors were out of Lang Vei, except for one.

Unknown to anyone, a lone American remained in the SF camp. 1st Lt. Tom



dead, two spent five years as POWs, all survivors were wounded, some two or three times.

Todd, an engineer officer, sent to inspect camp defenses, had spent the entire battle inside the medical bunker. Realizing he was doomed, he crawled to the TOC and found Moreland dead, the TOC deserted. To the east, he could see helicopters landing in the Laotian positions, evacuating the camp survivors. Without a shot being fired at him, he ran the entire distance to the Lao camp in record time.

### They filed upstairs, stumbling over stacked bodies.

By 1800 the battle for Lang Vei was over and its last survivors lifted out to Khe Sanh. As the Special Forces soldiers arrived at Khe Sanh aid stations, many of them were nearly incoherent, some with rage at being sacrificed, some just numb from two days of hand-to-hand combat.

The camp and its equipment was a total loss. Of 484 Vietnamese, Bru, Hre and American personnel, almost all were dead or captured. Of the Americans, half were dead and two spent five years as POWs. All survivors were wounded, some two or three times.

For the first time in the Vietnam war, tanks had been employed against Allied troops. Lang Vei would be remembered as the place where more decorations for valor were awarded to a Special Forces unit than any other in the war. It would also be remembered for its awful sacrifice for no good reason.

But perhaps most significantly, it would be remembered as the place where the NVA would lose the better part of a regiment and 13 tanks against determined men with courage and grenades in a proposition more expensive than either side had bargained for.



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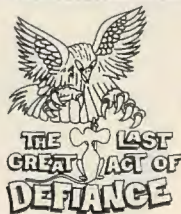
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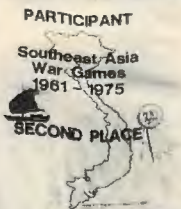
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Top seven Second Chance shooters: left to right, standing to kneeling, places 1 through 7. See list, opposite page, for names.

# BOWL 'EM OVER!

## 1979 2ND CHANCE COMBAT SHOOT

by John Howard

**T**HE third annual Second Chance Combat Shoot gave more than 350 contestants an opportunity to test their combat shooting skills, win some first-rate prizes and have a great time.

Bill Wilson of Berryville, Arkansas, won first place for the best overall time, first place for individual time and first place in the new Duelatron event. Wilson, a top gunsmith who specializes in custom work, used a Colt .45 as did most of the shooters.

The object in the Second Chance Shoot is to shoot five regulation bowling pins off a table in the shortest time possible. The shooter stands 25 feet from the table with gun drawn. One of the tricks here is that the pins must be knocked *off* the table — it's three feet to table edge. This requirement injects an element of luck into the game as occasionally a bullet striking one pin will throw a hunk of wood into another pin, knocking it down — but not off — the table. A bowling pin on its side

is a more difficult target than one upright. If the pin isn't hit squarely, it will often roll around on the table, knocking over others.

This competition is heavily weighted in favor of big guns, .45 or .44 calibers. Anything smaller just doesn't do the job. The .357 magnum and 9mm para will knock the pins down but rarely off the table. A heavy bullet is required to carry the pin up and off the table. Most shooters prefer a .45 hollow-point because they believe it will bite into the pin upon impact. One consideration is whether a gun can digest hollow-points — many unworked Colts will jam on some deep-dish hollow-point rounds. A hit, even a glancing hit, with a ball round is better than a jam with a super-duper hollow-point.

Basic event is the five-pin shoot which may be tried seven times. Total time and best individual time are two separate categories which can win prizes. Lowest total-time winner this year (Bill Wilson)

received \$500 cash, a bunch of Super-Vel ammo and a trophy. Winner of the best individual time (Bill Wilson again) won \$300 cash.

There were several other events: the .44 Special which was a one-time shoot at five pins for the lowest time. The winner (Bill Wilson again) got a .44 Bulldog revolver. There was a Duelatron event which was supposed to test the shooter's ability to discriminate between bad-guy and good-guy paper targets. This event was poorly organized and there were several complaints that it did not test ability to distinguish criminals from bystanders as much as it tested long-range pistol shooting (one target was at least 100 meters away) and memory (shooters had to remember which of the nine targets had already been shot, to avoid shooting the same one again).

But for serious shooters after big money, there was the two-man team event. Shooters can enter this as often as





Showing how it's done at third annual Second Chance Combat shoot held 7-10 June 1979, at Central Lake, Michigan.

they like for \$5 per man per try. All fees collected for this event were given out as prizes: 40 percent to the first-place winners which amounted to \$1,188; 30 percent for second place (\$742.50); 20 percent for third place and 10 percent for fourth.

The "Unlimited" event is perhaps the most fun to watch. Shooters may use almost any type of weapon, most popular being the 12-gauge shotgun and the .45 Thompson submachine gun. Eight pins must be knocked off the table and it is amazing how many shooters went through an entire magazine or shotgun load without hitting even one pin, underscoring the point that wild, fast, off-the-hip

shooting (especially with full-auto weapons) is pretty much a waste of time and ammo. Winners in this event all shot carefully and with discipline. The winner, William J. Byrd of Oxford, Miss., used 00 Buck from a Remington Model 1100 with a 28-inch barrel. His weapon was equipped with a Quick-Point sight. Byrd's winning time was 3.5 seconds.

The Second Chance Combat Shoot differs from most other shooting competitions in that it stresses camaraderie, relaxation and just plain fun. Unlike most shoots where one feels like a trainee back in boot camp and where competitors regard one another with hostile rivalry, at the Second Chance match top competitors

lend each other weapons and ammo and share tips. There is a real sense of friendliness and credit must be given to Second Chance president Richard Davis, who sets the overall tone and mood of the match by his constant good humor. Davis does a never-ending five-day comic monologue on the P.A. system, which keeps everyone laughing.

The Second Chance Combat Shoot will be held again next June. Shooters interested in going to Michigan in 1980 must make advance reservations as there will be a limited number of contestants. Write: Second Chance, Box 578, Central Lake, MI 49622.

## SECOND CHANCE COMBAT SHOOT WINNERS

Best Total Time:	Seconds
1. Bill Wilson, Berryville, AR	30.7
2. Nick R. Pruitt, Coachella, CA	32.5
3. H.W. Umburger, Memphis, TN	34.9
4. Ray Neal, Bermuda Dunes, CA	35.7
5. Massad Ayoob, Concord, NH	40.3
6. Darryll L. Early, Pleasant Gap, PA	40.7
7. Lowell R. Wells, Gas City, IN	41.9
8. Tom Blizzard, Springfield, OH	43.0
9. Fred Levan, Springfield, OH	43.3
10. Leonard Knight, Apple Valley, CA	44.0
Best Individual Time:	Seconds
1. Bill Wilson, Berryville, AR	3.9
2. Nick R. Pruitt, Coachella, CA	4.0
3. John Shaw, Memphis, TN	4.2
4. Lowell Wells, Gas City, In	4.2
Two-Man Team:	Seconds
1. Ray Neal & Nick R. Pruitt	3.8
2. Jerry Usher & Leonard Knight	3.9
3. H.W. Umburger & Chuck Bingham	3.9
Unlimited Event:	Seconds
1. William J. Byrd, Oxford, MS	3.5
2. Jim Blackard, Tulsa, OK	3.6
3. Nick R. Pruitt, Coachella, CA	3.7
4. Lew Sharp, Shreveport, LA	3.9
Duelatron Event:	Seconds
1. Bill Wilson, Berryville, AR	
2. M.J. Burnett, Kearns, UT	
3. Leonard Knight, Apple Valley, CA	



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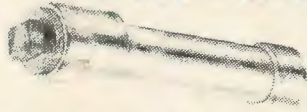
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## FLAK

Continued from page 6

## AFRICA THEN AND NOW ...

Dear Mr. Poos:

Congratulations on a most auspicious beginning as editor of SOF with your article, "Disaster To Glory."

As a military historian, I have had occasion to research the saga of Rorke's Drift as background to my book, *The Bantams*, and I must express my honest admiration for your ability to convey the details of this epic little battle in such succinct terms. I have relayed it to the South Wales' Borderers Museum. Though my own personal experiences as a British combat veteran in some dirty little wars in the Horn of Africa that nobody now has ever heard of — as long ago as 1950 — may threaten to hopelessly "date" me, I have kept up with the projections of what I then observed. I want you to know that the sentiments and facts which SOF presents today are unique in their clear-eyed presentation of the real world in Rhodesia/SW Africa/RSA. Would that your reportage could be conveyed to the men-at-the-top in North American political offices! If they could only hack their way through the tendrils of liberal wool-headedness which surround them via the media and their socialist-educated young advisors, influential public officials would be able to see the desperately sad future which looms ahead for black Africans and for the white settlers there.

When sanctions by the blindfolded Western democracies inevitably result in communist takeover of South Africa's gold and Rhodesia's manganese, the shock-waves will strike all Americans and their friends in that shrinking community we still are able to label as the Free World.

Sincerely,  
Sidney Allinson  
Scarborough, Ont., Canada

*Thanks. You've just made my year, not to mention day. —The Ed.*

## INDIAN ERROR NOTED ...

Sirs:

In your May '79 feature story of Major F.S. Burnham, DSO, you state that Major Burnham was born on May 11, 1861, at the edge of the Sioux Reservation in Minnesota and narrowly escaped death the following year when Chief Red Cloud led his braves in an uprising which killed hundreds of white women and children.

Being an Oglala Sioux and living on the present Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, I have a little knowledge of the great chief, Red Cloud, and his whereabouts at the time of the uprising in Minnesota. In 1861, Red Cloud was in what is now Wyoming and, although a chief, had not started his campaign to rid his land of encroaching whites. It was not

until 1863 that he was heard from and in that year he was well on his way trying to defend Indian land from white settlers and gold seekers. According to his grandson and present chief, Oliver Red Cloud, Chief Red Cloud was never east of the Missouri River. I can only guess that after the burning of New Ulm the Burnham family moved west to Wyoming and was involved in the Red Cloud War of later years.

"The killing of hundreds of women and children" was stated next. You fail to mention the harsh retaliation taken against the Sioux after the war was over. You fail to mention the misery, starvation and death which fell upon those Sioux survivors unlucky enough to have lived through it.

Majors Arvidson and Downey did not do much research into this part of their story or they would have found out that Little Wolf was one of the leaders in this uprising. But since it was such an insignificant part of the overall story I guess some people will overlook it and forget it. I think all untruths, however insignificant, should be straightened out.

White Eyes, Oglala Sioux  
Ex-Paratrooper, 82nd Airborne  
Pine Ridge, South Dakota

*We agree. Thanks for letting us know your side of the story. —The Eds.*

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## SPECIAL FORCES SLIP ...

Sirs:

Just received the April SOF and as usual, it's great.

Have one comment: in the review of James Ladd's book on page 90, Dennis Martin refers to "World War II's Special Forces." There were *no* U.S. Army Special Forces until the summer of 1952, when the old 10th Group was activated here at Ft. Bragg. The unit he refers to was the First Special Service Force, a Canadian-American volunteer unit formed at Ft. William Henry Harrison, near Helena, Montana, in 1942. As the command historian, I am sure of my facts, and many Berets will catch this error in the author's research.

Sincerely,

Bev Lindsey,

Fayetteville, North Carolina

*And we should have caught the error before printing it. Thans for your assist, Bev.—The Eds.*

## BOOK ADDRESS CORRECTION ...

In our review of Simon Murray's *Legionnaire* (SOF, September '79) we inadvertently gave an incorrect address for the publisher. To order the book directly, write to New York Times Books, care of Harper and Row, 10 E. 53rd St., New York, NY 10022.

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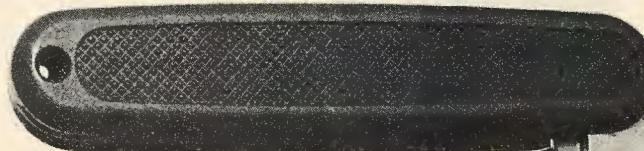
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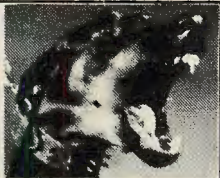
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## PROFESSIONAL TRAINING NEEDED ...

Sirs:

Your magazine is great, from beginning to end. The newspapers would never carry some of the articles you do. I just finished reading the August issue from cover to cover and especially liked "Danger in the Night" by Daryl Tucker. I had been thinking about going to Rhodesia for months. I decided I do not have enough experience in the handling of arms, and I have no combat experience. I am considering joining the U.S.M.C. for the experience, because I believe I would only be a hindrance, not a help, to Rhodesia.

Sincerely,  
Steven M. Brafford  
Waukesha, Wisconsin

## M-60 PHOTO REVERSED ...

Sirs:

I just received my August SOF and while looking through the article, "Rattle Battle," I couldn't help but notice the picture on page 33. You show an M-60 machine gun with a right-hand feed. I have been working with weapons in the Army for about five years and have never seen or heard of an M-60 with a right-hand feed. You clearly printed the picture backwards. You can tell by the man in the field jacket. First, a field jacket snaps left over right, not right over left as shown in the picture. Second, the first-aid pouch is worn on the left side, not the right.

Keep up the good work,  
William S. West  
APO, New York, New York

Thanks for catching this photo reversal.  
— The Eds.

Continued on page 86

## NRA

Continued from page 25

bat Model .45 auto. In response to the letters and phone calls I have received about the "Wildey" pistol — they were not at the show nor did anyone I talked with know anything of their status.

Nobody realizes better than I production problems in tooling for new handguns or their accessories. There have been half a dozen allegedly "new" handguns announced in the past two years as slated for production. I would like to see a few production models off the line before all the marketing hoopla. I know we have to test the market to satisfy the whims of bankers or investors, but whatever happened to tradition and integrity? These statements don't include the small custom shop with few employees, offering custom guns and quality accessories. These guys are usually good. That's why the six-months-to-a-year wait. They don't compromise quality for production. I speak of the characters who display a prototype and take orders for six-month delivery, then run around the next year trying to find somebody to do their tooling and investment casting.



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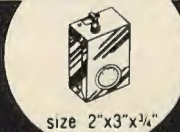
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## ASSAULT RIFLE NOMENCLATURE ...

I would like to take issue with Chuck Taylor's use of some terms employed to describe a number of different types of military small arms, published in some of his recent SOF "Full Auto" columns.

I wish to emphasize that much of what I write will be my own opinion. However, it is based on both personal experience and intensive reading of background material written by some of the world's leading firearms experts. (A reference source is included.)

Taylor describes an "Assault Rifle" as: "A short-barreled carbine of select-fire capability, utilizing an intermediate powered cartridge." I hold that if this is so, then the U.S. M2 carbine of World War II and Korean conflict vintage so qualifies. Furthermore, that weapon was developed more than four years before the Germans' MP44.

The FN-FAL and G3 have been chambered in 7.92 Kurtz and 7.62X39 and thus would meet Taylor's definition of "Assault Rifles." Some of his columns would seem to indicate that some FN-FALs are "Assault Rifles" and some are not.

I maintain that the *first* rifle to be called an "Assault Rifle" was the Cei-Rigotti, a firearm of Italian origin designed in 1895 — 49 years before the MP44. It utilized the 6.5mm and 7x57mm cartridges. Those

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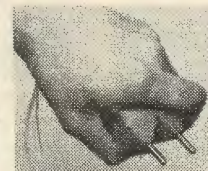
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are hardly "intermediately powered" cartridges. And it was capable of select fire. The Italians called this weapon an "Assault Rifle" because, simply, it was used for assaults by mounted troops. This, so far as most experts can determine, was the first time the term "Assault Rifle" was employed. And it describes the way the weapon was used in action, not its length, caliber, or fire capabilities.

I think the MP44 *Maschinen Pistole* was designed as a machine pistol — an extremely short-barreled hand or shoulder gun capable of full automatic fire. Some evidence indicates that the switch in nomenclature to "STG44" was politically inspired.

Please believe that I am not trying to be a nitpicker. But I don't want to chance running the risk of losing the literal meaning of terms which we use daily in talking and writing about firearms. There is no need for those of us who like to shoot to become enemies. We have enough enemies who would dearly love to prevent all of us from shooting anything, including bows and arrows. I merely submit that we should all agree upon common terminology.

Sincerely  
Gil Angelotti  
Arvada, Colorado

Reference Sources: *Brassey's Infantry Weapons of the World*, J.I.H. Owen; *Famous Rifles and Machine Guns*, Cormack, Hobart and Week; *Modern Small Arms*, Maj. Fredrick Myatt, M.C.; *Small Arms of the World*, Edward Clinton Ezell; *The Sub-Machine Gun*, F.W.A. Hobart; *The Machine Gun and Automatic Weapons Systems*, Col. George M. Chinn, USMC; *Jane's Infantry Weapons*.



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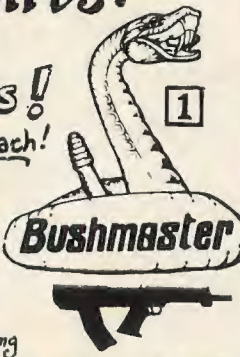
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## SCOTTISH SHOOTER

Contestant Tommy Morris traveled from Scotland to participate in the 1979 IPSC National matches held 4-7 July in Park City, Utah. Morris, 39, was born and raised in Glasgow, was a Royal Marine Commando reservist for over six years and spent a short time in the airborne territorial army as an assault engineer.

When he was 15, Morris began studying martial arts. After about six years of judo and unarmed combat techniques, Morris felt there was something missing regarding his pursuit of the martial arts. In 1961, he discovered karate. After a couple of years of learning from books and practicing daily, Morris found a karate club in Paris run by a fifth degree black belt who had just returned from Japan. Morris eventually was invited to the Paris club to train. By 1965, he earned a black belt through the French Karate Federation, the first black belt in Scotland.

In April of 1977, Morris completed Cooper's American Pistol Institute. Since then, he has been shooting whenever he gets time and recently shot at the Second Chance shoot in Michigan.

At IPSC Morris placed third in the Open Class with an overall score of 236.349. —N.E. MacDougald



(See feature article, "The Big One," page 54.)

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# BULLETIN BOARD

Continued from page 13

## SCHOOLBOY BRAVERY ...

Though wounded and armed with only a rifle, 15-year-old Jamie Scott fought off a dozen terrorists near Salisbury, saving the life of a friend in addition to his own. For his heroism, the Salisbury youth became the second person to receive the Conspicuous Gallantry Decoration, Rhodesia's highest civilian award for bravery.

Scott and friend Pieter Visser had been riding Visser's motorcycle when they came upon 10 to 15 terrs standing in the road. After dropping to the ground and taking cover behind the bike when the terrs began firing, Scott was hit twice as Visser ran for cover in the bush. Wounded again as he joined Visser, Scott's rifle jammed, and while he struggled to clear it, three terrorists advanced on them, thinking the boys dead or out of ammunition.

Scott cleared his rifle, then jumped up and charged the terrs, firing as he ran. Hit again, he pressed his attack until the disconcerted terrorists withdrew. Only after help arrived did he collapse from wounds to the back, thigh, chest and leg.


Scott's citation described his actions as "an act of the highest gallantry and brave conduct of outstanding order."

## BANKS ON TRIAL ...

International mercenary recruiter John Banks appeared in a London magistrate's court recently to answer charges he demanded \$250,000 from a Nicaraguan Embassy official under threat of death.

Banks and three others involved with him in the extortion attempt were released on bail and ordered to surrender their passports.





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## USMC

Continued from page 53

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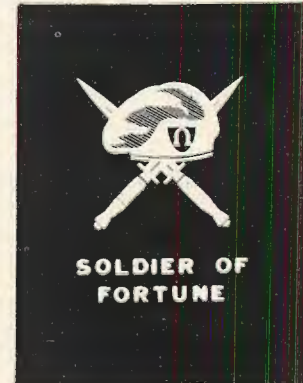
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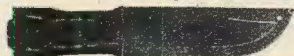
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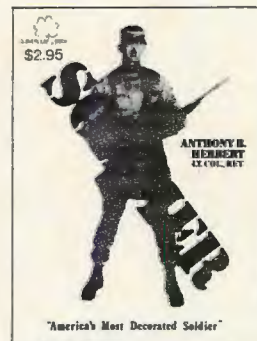
# THE SOLDIER'S HANDBOOK

PREPARED BY LT. COL. ANTHONY B. HERBERT, (Ret.)  
"America's Most Decorated Soldier"

JUNE, 1979

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